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Title:

Collaborating with English teachers in developing and implementing a context sensitive communicative approach in Taiwanese EFL secondary school classes

Volumes 1 of 2

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

Communicative approaches, such as communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT), have been promoted in second language education around the world for over four decades. This continued mainstream status may be due to their convincing theoretical bases in principles of second language acquisition, which are believed to be beneficial to language learners. However, they are not widely accepted by teachers in many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. A number of studies in a variety of contexts have aimed to identify factors which impede their implementation, but few of these have further built on the implications of these investigations. The current investigation, instead, studied classroom practice in a Taiwanese EFL secondary school, in order to identify and solve any problems arising. Based on the assumption that teacher learning is a complex process, it was necessary to set up a teacher development programme (TD) and use action research to explore how it could help teachers develop their practitioner knowledge of communicative approaches.

Drawing on the data from questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations, the main finding was that the teachers' limited understanding of these approaches seemed to be a more dominant factor than the teachers' beliefs. This resulted in perceptions of learners, syllabus/textbooks and time becoming barriers to the implementation of the approaches, as often pointed out in past studies. This study also found effective ways to encourage teachers to learn to implement this new pedagogy. First, supplying examples of a theory's practical application equipped practitioners to develop practical knowledge of that theory. Second, collaborative learning between the teachers, as well as the assistance of an expert, helped make the teacher education programme work. This led to the conclusion that communicative approaches motivated teachers in their professional practice.

The findings of this research could shed light on these aspects of L2 teaching in a variety of other similar contexts and could be useful for educational policymakers, practitioners, and teacher educators in implementing innovative approaches.

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CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE	1
ABSTRACT	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
LIST OF CONTENTS	7
LIST OF FIGURES	19
LIST OF TABLES	21
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED	23

LIST OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 Introduction	25
1.1 The development of communicative approaches to language teaching	25
1.2 Rationale for the study	27
1.2.1 The potential benefits of communicative approaches to language teaching	28
1.2.2 Curriculum design and communicative approaches to teaching English	30
1.2.3 The implementation of communicative approaches to teaching English in school settings	31
1.2.4 The barriers to the implementation of communicative approaches	32
1.2.5 Potential solutions to the barriers	34
1.2.6 The use of action research as a framework for developing teachers' professional practice	35
1.3 The significance of the study	37
1.4 Research aim	37
1.5 Outline of the thesis	39

Chapter 2 Context of the study	41
2.1 National curriculum in Taiwan	41
2.1.1 School and parallel systems	41
2.1.2 English education reforms	42
2.1.3 English national curriculum guidelines	43
2.1.4 Materials and assessments under the guidelines	44
2.2 English teaching in Taiwanese classrooms	46
2.2.1 Teachers' busy school life	46
2.2.2 Mismatch between curriculum guidelines and pedagogical realities	46
2.2.3 Unsatisfactory formal school teaching results and cram schooling	47
2.2.4 Mixed ability learners in high schools	48
2.2.5 The situation needs to be improved	49
2.3 Historical and current teacher education/development	50
2.3.1 Preparation for pre-service teachers	50
2.3.2 Continuous professional development	51
 Chapter 3 Theoretical frameworks and literature review	 53
3.1 Key features of communicative approaches	53
3.1.1 Definitions of communicative approaches	54
3.1.2 Primary focus on meaning	56
3.1.2.1 The importance of focus on meaning (FonM) to SLA	56
3.1.2.2 The integration of FonM and FonFs and communicative approaches	62
3.1.3 Learner participation in interaction	68
3.1.3.1 Interaction generates comprehensive input	69
3.1.3.2 Interaction promotes learning form	70

3.1.3.3 Interaction as a mediated process	72
3.1.3.4 The importance of participation to SLA	74
3.1.4 Outcome in task	75
3.1.5 Summary of the key features in communicative approaches	76
3.2 The framework for observing and evaluating teachers' professional growth	77
3.2.1 An overview of frameworks commonly used in past studies	78
3.2.1.1 Mangubhai <i>et al.</i> 's list of CLT attributes	78
3.2.1.2 Littlewood's a five-category continuum	80
3.2.1.3 Willis and Willis' characterisation of tasks	83
3.2.1.4 Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Scheme (COLT)	83
3.2.1.5 Kumaravadivelu's postmethod pedagogy	85
3.2.2 Operationalising the key features to an observation framework	86
3.2.2.1 Primary focus on meaning in the dynamic nature of classrooms	87
3.2.2.2 Observing learner participation	88
3.3 Factors impeding the implementation of communicative approaches	98
3.3.1 Lack of understanding	98
3.3.2 Teachers' beliefs	102
3.3.3 Teacher knowledge	104
3.3.3.1 Received knowledge vs. practitioner knowledge	106
3.3.3.2 Practical knowledge (PK)	108
3.3.3.3 Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)	109
3.3.4 Contextual factors	113
3.3.4.1 Possible challenges of traditional cultural beliefs	113
3.3.4.2 Time available in school	114
3.3.4.3 School and national examinations	115

3.3.4.4 Textbooks	117
3.3.4.5 Learner factors	118
3.3.5 Other factors	120
3.3.6 The interaction between these factors	122
3.4 The theoretical framework of the teacher development programme	123
3.4.1 Complexity theory in a long-term teacher development programme	124
3.4.2 Conceptualisation of teacher learning: Towards a holistic view of teacher learning	126
3.4.3 Reflection and professional developments	128
3.4.4 The reflective cycles	132
3.4.5 Sociocultural aspects and reflection	136
3.4.6 Methods for the reflective teacher development (TD) programme	137
3.4.6.1 Workshops	138
3.4.6.2 Observations	141
3.4.6.3 Group discussions	144
3.4.6.4 Action research (AR), TD and reflections	145
3.5 Research questions	146
Chapter 4 Design of Enquiry	149
4.1 Philosophical framework	149
4.1.1 Social constructivism	150
4.1.2 Interpretivism	151
4.2 Methodology-- Action research (AR)	153
4.2.1 Philosophical bases of AR	154
4.2.2 Compatibility between AR and the theoretical framework in this study	156
4.2.2.1 AR and complexity theory	156

4.2.2.2 AR and reflection	157
4.2.2.3 AR and sociocultural theory	157
4.2.3 Participation in this AR study: open for changes	159
4.2.4 Scarcity of AR in ELT	161
4.3 Research setting and participants	162
4.4 Overview of methods	162
4.5 Questionnaires	164
4.5.1 First questionnaire	165
4.5.2 Second questionnaire	166
4.5.3 Pilot questionnaires	166
4.6 Classroom observations	167
4.7 Interviews	169
4.7.1 Interviews with teachers at Phase 1	171
4.7.2 Interviews with teachers at Phase 2	171
4.7.3 Interviews with students at Phase 2	172
4.8 Data collection procedures	173
4.8.1 Phase 1	174
4.8.2 Phase 2	176
4.8.3 Phase 3	177
4.9 Data analysis	178
4.9.1 Qualitative data	178
4.9.1.1 Questionnaires	179
4.9.1.2 Interviews	180
4.9.1.3 Observations	180
4.9.2 Quantitative data	182
4.9.3. Conversation analysis (CA)	183

4.10 Trustworthiness of the research	185
4.10.1 Principles for credibility	186
4.10.2 Using rich, thick description for dependability	188
4.10.3 Peer examination and audit trail for internal reliability	188
4.10.4 Clarification of researchers' bias and being reflective for confirmability	189
4.10.5 Transferability	190
4.10.6 Limitations of this study	192
4.11 Ethical considerations and related issues	193
Chapter 5 Results	197
5.1 Teacher and student information collected in the preparation stage	197
5.1.1 Participants	197
5.1.1.1 Teacher participants	197
5.1.1.2 Student participants	199
5.1.2 Students' attitudes towards L2 teaching and learning	200
5.1.2.1 Students' attitudes towards their English learning	200
5.1.2.2 Students' preferences and problems	201
5.1.3 Teachers' stated beliefs and knowledge of communicative approaches	205
5.1.4 Preliminary observations of the teachers' practice	207
5.1.4.1 Description of observations	208
5.1.4.2 Common features in the teacher talk	211
5.1.5 Workshop1	213
5.2 The teachers' practitioner knowledge development in the first research cycle	217
5.2.1 Diana	217

5.2.1.1 The features of Diana's teacher talk	217
5.2.1.2 Diana's first group work activities	221
5.2.2 Wendy	224
5.2.2.1 The features of Wendy's teacher talk	224
5.2.2.2 The interview activity	228
5.2.2.3 Guessing word game	230
5.2.3 Ken's task-like activities	231
5.2.4 Workshop 2	237
5.3 The teachers' practitioner knowledge development in the second research cycle	241
5.3.1 Diana	241
5.3.1.1 Diana's changes in teaching form	242
5.3.1.2 Diana's preliminarily developed context-based communicative activity	244
5.3.2 Ken	249
5.3.2.1 Guidance and modelling still dominating in Ken's class	249
5.3.2.2 Awareness of learners' involvement in the task	252
5.3.3 Wendy: Combination of FonFs instruction in meaningful contexts	253
5.3.4 Workshop 3	259
5.4 The teachers' practitioner knowledge development in the third research cycle	261
5.4.1 Diana	261
5.4.1.1 Improvement in teacher talk	261
5.4.1.2 Diana's developing pedagogy	265
5.4.2 Wendy	266
5.4.2.1 Further improvement in FonM practice	266

5.4.2.2 Continued loss of focus in role play and discussion	270
5.4.3 Ken	272
5.4.3.1 Return to more familiar ways of teaching	273
5.4.3.2 Revealing belief in a structural syllabus	274
5.4.4 Workshop 4	277
5.5 The teachers' practitioner knowledge development in the fourth research cycle	280
5.5.1 Diana	280
5.5.1.1 The use of authentic materials	280
5.5.1.2 Experiencing a structured-input activity for teaching form	283
5.5.2 Ken	285
5.5.2.1 The use of guessing games	285
5.5.2.2 Using authentic materials	288
5.5.3 Wendy	290
5.5.3.1 Unawareness of the potential for communicative approaches	291
5.5.3.2 Features of Wendy's practice discouraging interaction in L2	294
5.5.4 Workshop 5	295
5.6 The teachers' practitioner knowledge development in the fifth research cycle	297
5.6.1 Ken	298
5.6.1.1 Information gap activity	298
5.6.1.2 The interview activity	300
5.6.2 Wendy	302
5.6.2.1 Persistent beliefs in PPP	302
5.6.2.2 Understanding that less control creates more learning opportunities	305
5.6.3 Diana: Fully engaged in communicative activities	307

5.6.4 Workshop 6	309
5.7 Contextual factors	311
5.7.1 Interviews with students	311
5.7.2 2 nd Questionnaire	315
5.7.2.1 Students' attitudes towards the changes the teachers had made	315
5.7.2.2 Students' perceptions of their progress	316
5.7.2.3 Increased preference in communicative approaches	318
5.7.3 Integrating all data sets	319
5.7.4 School examination results	321
5.8 Conclusion	322
6 Discussion	323
6.1 RQ1: how the teachers' knowledge grew	323
6.1.1 The baseline practitioner knowledge of communicative approaches	323
6.1.1.1 Knowledge about the teacher's role	324
6.1.1.2 Knowledge about language teaching	327
6.1.1.3 Knowledge about the learners	331
6.1.1.4 Knowledge about contextual factors: time	333
6.1.1.5 Knowledge about the curriculum: the textbook	335
6.1.2 Teachers' understanding of communicative approaches	336
6.1.3 Practitioner knowledge growth in communicative approaches	338
6.1.3.1 Practitioner knowledge about the teacher's role	339
6.1.3.2 Practitioner knowledge about language teaching	342
6.1.3.3 Practitioner knowledge about the learners	352
6.1.3.4 Practitioner knowledge about contextual factors	354
6.2 RQ2: how the teacher education programme helped the teachers'	356

knowledge growth	
6.2.1 The design/methodology used in action research	357
6.2.2 The methods used in the TD programme	359
6.2.2.1 Observations	360
6.2.2.2 Group discussions	364
6.2.2.3 Teachers' engagement and their knowledge development	367
6.2.3 The use of input and its adjustment	369
6.2.3.1 The input as planned	370
6.2.3.2 The input supplied to (individual) teachers' needs and preference	371
6.2.3.3 Conclusion	375
6.2.4. The strategies developed in response to circumstances	376
6.2.4.1 Strategy 1: Supplement with practical examples	377
6.2.4.2 Strategy 2: Employment of case studies	377
6.2.4.3 Strategy 3: Presentation of scenarios as evidence	378
6.2.4.4 Strategy 4: Report students' responses to scenarios	381
6.2.4.5 Conclusion	383
6.2.5 Compelling principles of communicative approaches	383
6.2.6 The areas of PK and PCK growth helped by this TD programme	384
6.2.7 Main findings	386
6.2.7.1 Learning from practical examples	386
6.2.7.2 Learning from sociocultural perspective	389
6.2.8 Further discussion	390
6.2.8.1 The validity of the claim of practitioner knowledge growth in communicative approaches	391 394
6.2.8.2 How AR worked	391
6.2.8.3 Positive impacts from the voluntary nature	394

6.3 RQ3: contextual factors	395
6.3.1 Time factor	395
6.3.2 Textbooks	397
6.3.3 Student factors	398
6.3.3.1 Mismatch between the students' abilities, preferences and their teachers' practice	398
6.3.3.2 Students' perceptions of communicative activities to learning and motivation	400
6.3.3.3 Students' perceptions and SLA	402
6.3.3.4 Teachers' interactive manners matter	403
6.3.4 Conclusion	405
Chapter 7 Conclusion and implications	409
7.1 Introduction	409
7.2 Summary of main findings	409
7.3 Implications for practitioners	411
7.4 Implications for organising TD/TE programmes	414
7.5 Implications for policy makers	417
7.6 Limitation of this study and recommendations for further research	419
7.7 Contributions to knowledge in the field	421
Appendixes	
Appendix 1.1 Certificate of ethical research approval	424
Appendix 1.2 Consent forms	428
Appendix 2.1 The scope and sequence of the textbook	432
Appendix 2.2 The sample of a lesson in the textbook	433

Appendix 4.1	Questionnaire 1	435
Appendix 4.2	Questionnaire 2	440
Appendix 4.3	First interview with teachers	442
Appendix 4.4	The first interview schedule with students	445
Appendix 4.5	Time line of data collection procedures	448
Appendix 5.1	Table 5.3: Students' attitudes (Questionnaire 1- Part 1)	450
Appendix 5.2	Table 5.4 Things students like to do in English class (complete)	451
	Table 5.6 Things students dislike to do in English class (complete)	452
Appendix 5.3	The original plan of 90 minutes for Workshop 1	453
Appendix 5.4	The transcription system and Diana's Activity 2 transcript	454
Appendix 5.5	Extract 3 transcript	456
Appendix 5.6	Suggestions to the teacher responding to the first observations	458
Appendix 5.7	Table 5.15 Observation- behaviour and strategy sheet- Ken-1-2	460
Appendix 5.8	Table 5.16 Observation- behaviour and strategy sheet- Ken-1-3	461
Appendix 5.9	The extract of John's reflections in Workshop 2	463
Appendix 5.10	Lesson 5 warm-up activity in Ken's class	464
Appendix 5.11	Examples of communicative approaches and activities	465
Appendix 5.12	Comparing the features of Wendy's teacher talk	467
Appendix 5.13	Recommendation for the role-play in lesson 7	467
Appendix 5.14	Ken's worksheets for the third observation	468
Appendix 5.15	Ken's worksheets for the fifth observation	469
Appendix 5.16	Wendy's future tense activity	470
Appendix 5.17	Table 5.27-29 Students' attitudes towards the changes the teacher had made	471
Appendix 5.18	Table 5.30-32 Students' perceptions of their progress	473
BIBLIOGRAPHY		474

List of Figures

Figure 3.1	The explicit-implicit instruction continuum	64
Figure 3.2	An input-enrichment activity (Ellis, 2010: 45)	65
Figure 3.3	An input-enrichment activity (Thornbury, 1999: 51)	66
Figure 3.4	A structured input activity (Ellis, 2010: 45)	67
Figure 3.5	The continuum from focus on forms to focus on meaning (Littlewood, 2004: 322)	81
Figure 3.6	Two dimensions in task- based foreign language learning (Littlewood, 2004: 324)	82
Figure 3.7	The outline of the observation framework	89
Figure 3.8	The observation framework	97
Figure 3.9	The teacher iceberg	122
Figure 3.10	Reflective practice model of professional education/development	133
Figure 3.11	Kolb's reflective model (1984: 21)	134
Figure 3.12	Ur's 'Enriched Reflection' model (1996: 7)	135
Figure 4.1	The ideal model of the current AR project	161
Figure 4.2	Data analysis framework for observation data	182
Figure 5.1	The transcription system in Appendix 5.4	
Figure 5.2	The interview activity	227
Figure 5.3	The 'designing dialogues' activity	234
Figure 5.4	Photo of the jigsaw reading activity in Diana's second observed class-1	246
Figure 5.5	Photo of the jigsaw reading activity in Diana's second observed Class-2	246
Figure 5.6	Activity for the infinitive	254
Figure 5.7	The students' response in Wendy's grammar activity	255

	combined with group discussion	
Figure 5.8	Diana's Activity1: Discussing the causes and effects of the unhealthy habits	262
Figure 5.9	Wendy's discussion activity in O3	450
Figure 5.10	The 'guessing who I am' activity	286
Figure 5.11	An example of the Career Day video	289
Figure 5.12	A photo of Wendy commenting on the students' drawing	292
Figure 5.13	Examples of the interview questions	303
Figure 5.14	Improvement perceived in seven areas	317
Figure 5.15	An example of grammar practice sheet	319

List of Tables

Table 4.1	RQs and data collection instruments	164
Table 4.2	Observation-behaviour and strategy sheet	168
Table 4.3	Data collection procedures	174
Table 4.4	Coding scheme for observation data	181
Table 5.1	Background information of the teacher participants	198
Table 5.2	Age when students started learning English	199
Table 5.3	Students' attitudes (Questionnaire 1- Part 1) in Appendix 5.1	202
Table 5.4	Things students like to do in English class	202
Table 5.5	The results of students' preference-1	203
Table 5.6	Things students dislike to do in English class	203
Table 5.7	The results of students' preference-2	203
Table 5.8	Problems encountered by the students	204
Table 5.9	Features of the teacher talk in preliminary observations	212
Table 5.10	The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 1	215
Table 5.11	Features of Diana's teacher talk in the first observation	220
Table 5.12	Analysis of Diana's first group work activity	222
Table 5.13	Features of Wendy's teacher talk in the first observation	226
Table 5.14	Observation behaviour and strategy sheet-Ken-1-1	232
Table 5.15	Observation- behaviour and strategy sheet- Ken-1-2 in Appendix 5.7	460
Table 5.16	Observation- behaviour and strategy sheet- Ken-1-3 in Appendix 5.8	461
Table 5.17	Evaluation of Ken's activity-1	236
Table 5.18	The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 2	238
Table 5.19	Features of Diana's teaching of vocabulary in O2	243

Table 5.20	The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 3	259
Table 5.21	Comparing the features of Diana's teacher talk	264
Table 5.22	Comparing the features of Wendy's teacher talk in Appendix 5.12	467
Table 5.23	The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 4	278
Table 5.24	The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 5	295
Table 5.25	The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 6	310
Table 5.26	Students' attitudes towards the changes the teacher had made	312
Table 5.27	Ken's students' attitudes towards the changes the teacher had made	471
Table 5.28	Diana's students' attitudes towards the changes the teacher had made	471
Table 5.29	Wendy's students' attitudes towards the changes the teacher had made	472
Table 5.30	Ken's students' perceptions of improvement in the seven areas	473
Table 5.31	Wendy's students' perceptions of improvement in the seven areas	473
Table 5.32	Diana's students' perceptions of improvement in the seven areas	473
Table 5.33	School exam results	321
Table 6.1	Participants' attendance in the TD programme	368

List of abbreviations used

AR	action research
CA	Conversation Analysis
CLT	communicative language teaching
COLT	Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Scheme
CR tasks	consciousness-raising tasks
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FonFs	Focus on forms
FonF	Focus on form
FonM	Focus on meaning
L2	second language
MOE	the Ministry of Education
PCK	pedagogical content knowledge
PK	practical knowledge
SI	the structured input activities
activities	
SLA	second language acquisition
TBLT	task-based language teaching
TD	teacher development
TE	teacher education
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language
TOEIC	Test of English for International Communication
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TTT	teacher talking time
STT	student talking time

Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter begins by introducing the topic of this doctoral study, and the rationale of focusing on the issue of the implementation of communicative approaches in a Taiwanese secondary school where English is taught as a Foreign Language (EFL). They are followed by the aims of the study, the significance of the study and finally, the outline of this thesis.

1.1 The development of communicative approaches to language teaching

Theories and methodologies in the field of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) keep evolving. Language learning was viewed mainly as a psychological phenomenon until the 1970s. In the behaviourist view, learning an L2, as with any skill, necessitated the psychological formation of habits by means of the creation of responses generated through repeated stimuli. The implication of this approach is Audiolingualism, once in vogue in the 1960s and early 1970 (Richards, 1998). The behaviourist perspective was under attack by the time of Chomsky's review of Skinner's book in 1959 (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Chomsky argues that children's linguistic behaviours are determined by a deep innate faculty (Mitchell & Myles, 2004; Crenfell & Macaro, 2007). Chomsky's Universal Grammar is believed to be a sufficient theory to explain and illustrate human language (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). However, it was criticised on the ground that it presupposed an ideal speaker-hearer and perfect competence, without consideration of performance variables, e.g. psychological factors (Crenfell & Macaro, 2007). Critiquing Chomsky for treating an individual as abstract from the social community, isolated, and 'unmotivated cognitive mechanism', Hymes (1972: 272) introduced a new paradigmatic perspective:

communicative competence. This refers to the individual's achievements in choosing the appropriate and effective language from a verbal and non-verbal repertoire with respect to his/her speech communities. From this sociolinguistic perspective, meaning is related to both the linguistic structures and the social contexts in which language operates. Halliday's (1973, 1978) sociosemantic view of language learning contributes to Hymes' concept. Their work has inspired many of the communicative approaches that have since been proposed, for example, the employment of peer learning, the provision of authentic materials and the simulation of real situations (Canale & Swain, 1980). Meanwhile in Europe, there were urgent needs for immigrant workers to learn foreign languages effectively. Communication Language Teaching (CLT) was developed with an aim to meet these needs (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a).

CLT has quickly become the new orthodoxy in the field of TESOL since it was introduced (Nunan, 1991), perhaps due to the attractive nature of its underlying principles (Richards, 1998, explained below). However, there is considerable discussion as to its acceptability and adaptability in a number of EFL contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b). Substantial studies conducted in various EFL settings worldwide have suggested that implementation of communicative approaches or CLT can be difficult. These studies dated from as early as the 1990s: for example, Li's (1998) work in South Korea, then, in the early 2000s, Nunan's (2003) investigation of seven countries in the Asian-Pacific Region including Taiwan. More recent examples include Humphries and Burns' (2015) study in Japan.

Such doubts about CLT led to Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) becoming a new focus (Kumaravadivela, 2006b). TBLT has not been viewed as

a revolutionary approach. Nunan (2004: 10) concludes CLT is 'a broad, philosophical approach to the language curriculum that draws on theory and research in linguistics, anthropology and sociology' while 'task-based language teaching represents a realisation of this philosophy at the levels of syllabus design and methodology'. Littlewood (2007: 243) also regards TBLT as 'a development within the communicative approach'. Similarly, some scholars, e.g. Richards (2005: 29), view task-based instruction as an 'extension of the CLT movement' with an aim to develop learners' communicative competence. There will be thorough definitions of these terms in 3.1.1. In this thesis, CLT and TBLT are viewed as approaches within communicative approaches.

1.2 Rationale for the study

To date, communicative approaches are still the mainstream in TESOL. Despite the status of CLT and TBLT, they are not widely accepted in practice (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). A number of studies have investigated the practice of these approaches in a variety of contexts. Most have aimed to identify factors which impede their implementation, but few studies have further built on the implications of these investigations. The current study, instead, studied classroom practice in order to identify problems and solve them as they arose. Such research is necessary since, as I now argue, communicative approaches are beneficial to learners, and teachers need to understand other methods to enable critical reflection on their own practice.

1.2.1 The potential benefits of communicative approaches to language teaching

Communicative approaches have convincing theoretical bases in principles of second language acquisition (SLA), such as the input hypothesis (Krashen, 1981), the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1983, 1996), the output hypothesis (Swain, 1995) and sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2000a, b). In addition, communicative activities or tasks can be designed to take advantage of both implicit and explicit learning by integrating the two. Most SLA researchers agree that fluent L2 proficiency is primarily based on implicit knowledge (Ellis, 2006). Even so, traditional pedagogies, such as the grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods, which are not appropriate ways of developing implicit knowledge, are still dominant in the Taiwanese context (Savignon & Wang, 2003; Hsu, 2015), and in other EFL contexts such as Hong Kong and China (Mangubhai *et al.*, 2007; Littlewood, 2007; Richards, 2008; Carless, 2009).

Discrete-point grammar teaching, or what Long (2000) calls 'focus on forms' (FonFs) instruction, cannot alone lead to learners' development of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). Emphasis on form tends to lead learners to be 'structurally competent but communicatively incompetent' (Swan, 1985:7); that is, making utterances which native speakers do not make. Taiwanese test-takers in some international English proficiency tests, such as TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) did not generally achieve satisfying results (Chang, 2010; Wang, 2009). The issue of poor learner performance is, furthermore, not exclusive to Taiwan. Nunan (2003) points out that English plays a more prominent role in the education system of Hong Kong than in most other countries surveyed in his study. However, after the government had invested a

huge amount of funding in English language education at every level, graduate students' English language proficiency level remained unsatisfactory for the requirements of government and business (Nunan, 2003).

As a teacher of English for over 15 years, I have come to realise that a combination of focus-on-forms (FonFs) and focus-on-meaning (FonM) instruction can raise learners' achievements in all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). I enjoy designing various ways to teach English. I often select topics for students to discuss, or design activities enabling them to conduct surveys and report back. Classes have usually been very engaged in these types of communicative activities, even in sessions lasting more than one-and-a-half hours. I proposed that communicative approaches can also work in Taiwanese high schools where the class size is around 30. This is supported by Chang (2006), who reported that the implementation of communicative approaches was fruitful in a reputable senior high school in Taiwan.

Learning to use communicative approaches can also benefit teachers. As Van Manen (1995) suggests, teachers should constantly think about the methods that they are using and the grounds for using them; constantly considering alternatives to their aims and methods; and always being prepared to make changes based on student behaviors. Teachers should understand a wide range of teaching methods to help them make such adjustments. Similarly, Ur (2013b: 483) advises that teachers can learn much from studying different methods, and these should be considered 'as sources of information and insights rather than recommendations to be implemented as they stand'.

Even with these convincing advantages, communicative approaches are not widely accepted in teachers' practice in EFL settings, as discussed in the

following section.

1.2.2 Curriculum design and communicative approaches to teaching English

The impacts of globalisation have led to educational reforms across the world. In order to enhance national competitiveness, many countries where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) or second language (ESL), have reviewed the curricula. The influence of communicative approaches has reached the government policy makers, in many of these countries, with CLT or TBLT or a combination of both included in their national curricula (Nunan, 2003; Littlewood, 2007). For example, according to Deng and Carless (2009), CLT has been a recommended approach in the mainland Chinese curriculum since the 1990s, with the government's 2001 publication 'National English Language Standards' stating that it advocates TBLT (Littlewood, 2007). In Hong Kong, task-based approaches have been promoted through the curriculum guidelines in primary schools since 1997, and in secondary schools since 1999, with the most recent guidelines advising that teaching through TBLT should be learner-centered and should develop students' communicative competence through purposeful and contextualised interaction (in Carless, 2009). Similarly, in Japan, the official government rhetoric (Ministry of Education, 1999) stresses the importance of implementing real communicative activities so that students can achieve this objective (in Nunan, 2003). The concepts in these guidelines, i.e. 'learner-centered' methodologies, and the aim to 'develop students' communicative competence through purposeful and contextualised interaction' are at the heart of the communicative approach and exactly what this research aims to help teachers to achieve.

1.2.3 The implementation of communicative approaches to teaching English in school settings

At the level of the classroom, however, the aims highlighted in the previous section are rarely realised. A vast gap between government expectation and the classroom realities has been a commonly observed phenomenon. For example, Li (1998) concludes from a substantial body of studies that ‘in general, such innovations [of CLT into EFL contexts] have had a low rate of success (Brindley & Hood, 1990), and implementing CLT worldwide has often proven difficult (e.g. Anderson, 1993; Chick, 1996; Ellis, 1994, 1996...)’ (pp. 677-8). This remains the case twenty-five years later. As Carless (2009: 49) points out, TBLT approaches continue to be attractive to researchers, yet not necessarily to school teachers. He concludes that, in general, successful implementation of TBLT in Asian or in other international settings ‘has not yet been convincingly demonstrated’. This conclusion is backed up by other studies. For example, Nunan’s (2003) multiple case study found that a disjunction between curriculum rhetoric and pedagogical reality in all the countries surveyed. Carless (2003; 2009) in the context of Hong Kong context, Deng and Carless (2009) in China, and Humphries and Burns (2015) in Japan reached similar conclusions.

From my own observations in Taiwan, learning hardly happens in English classrooms in high schools. This statement is also found in Nunan (2003) in which he quotes his informants, ‘who spoke frankly of the fact that the quality of English language education in the public sector was so poor that “no one learns English in school”’ (p.606). People may argue that they have met some fluent English speakers from those countries. Again, my observation is congruent with Nunan’s informants: ‘the only children who stood a chance of learning English

were those whose parents could afford to send them to private, after-school language classes' (p.606). If this is the case, then the time and effort which the teachers and students invest into English class for three years in school is in vain.

1.2.4 The barriers to the implementation of communicative approaches

There is clearly a gap between theory and practice. Given this issue, the question has been raised as to whether the theories that have been developed in Europe/North America can be applied to other parts of the world (Pennycook, 1994). Contextual differences such as cultures (Rao, 1996; Hu, 2002) and the size of the average classroom size in Asian countries (Ur, 2013a) may prove to be decisive factors in the implementation of communicative approaches.

At the same time, some speculate that pedagogical theories are often developed by outsiders who have little practical experience in teaching and learning (Norwich, 2000; Carless, 2003). Kumaravadivelu (2006a) points out that his study and others' (e.g. Thornbury, 1996) provide evidence that teachers do not actually adhere to the basic principles associated with a particular method, even when they claim to follow it. Ur (2013a) also notes that it is often English language teacher preparation courses and literature, rather than practitioners, that adopt and are constrained by theory-driven methods.

Kumaravadivelu suggests that there is no 'one best method' for all contexts. Instead, he initiated the concept of 'postmethod' (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2003, 2006a, b), which suggests that teachers need to develop their own particular context-sensitive pedagogies. This has started the era of 'postmethod' (Brown,

2002). However, as Ur (2013: 469) points out, 'this trend does not seem to have developed further over the years'.

The views outlined above could partly explain the low acceptance of communicative approaches by many non-native English speaker teachers (NNEST). Carless (2003) argues that teachers' views are not taken into account when implementing pedagogic innovations, a view shared by Karavas-Doukas (1996). Changes in teaching behaviours may be painful and nonlinear (Thornbury, 1996). When teachers learn a new approach, they are adding new information into old sets of beliefs and knowledge (Ellis, 1996); the new information may conflict with pre-existing beliefs and make them resistant to change (Karavas-Doukas, 1996). Therefore, it is unlikely that significant changes would take place in teachers' pedagogical practice if they are simply 'introduced' to an approach. Instead, several steps should be taken to help teachers acquire knowledge about new approaches and therefore refine their practice (Bartels, 2005); that is, to develop their 'practitioner knowledge', which refers to 'knowledge how', implicit knowledge, or experiential knowledge that underlie teachers' practice (Richards, 2008).

1.2.5 Potential Solutions to the barriers

To summarise, the often cited problems with the implementation of communicative approaches include: as with other theories, that they are not context sensitive; they are impractical for practitioners; and they need to become established in teacher belief systems. Nonetheless, these supposed constraints are not necessarily accurate. To address the first issue (their non-context-sensitive nature), we do not adopt communicative approaches

wholesale, but adapt their main principles to our own contexts. There have been reported successful cases of the development of context-sensitive/contextualised communicative approaches. Take the example of Sullivan's (2000) case study of how a teacher in a Vietnamese university integrated CLT and local culture. The teacher applied their ancient tradition of oral verse (play on words) to teaching English. Meaningful interaction between the teacher and his students was observed in the teacher-fronted classroom, where pair and group work were impractical due to the size of the classroom. This is an inspiring example encouraging teachers in other EFL settings to develop their own communicative approaches within their own cultural and school contexts.

Regarding the issue of the practicality of applying communicative approaches to real classrooms, Hunter (2013) quotes Kurt Lewin's (1951: 169) remark that 'there is nothing so practical as a good theory'. Hunter (2013: 481) believes that this notion can be applied to 'methods' as well: 'even if they are over-generalized in relation to classrooms and contextual factors', methods still can be viewed as 'an invaluable starting point for teachers at a stage when they are still learning to make connections between experiences and theories for themselves'. Understanding methods, their limitations and their intended objectives is a form of scaffolding making possible to develop a post-methods perspective, a view shared with Ur (2013a).

The final issue (practitioners' beliefs), is an element too important to be neglected. Teachers' beliefs, teacher knowledge and teachers' behaviours interact with each other, and at the same time, interact with their specific contexts. Dewey's (1933) concept of 'reflective thought', later developed to be reflective teaching/practice, is very useful for teachers to examine these

interactions, by persistently considering how their belief or supposed form of knowledge is grounded. The reflective models, such as Wallace's (1991), are helpful to explain how a theory can be developed to be practitioner knowledge, that is, through experimenting with it in practice and reflecting on that experience. Teacher knowledge of a particular pedagogy can be described as well-developed when their expressed (or 'espoused') beliefs are consistent with their pedagogical behaviours (Williams & Burden, 1997).

1.2.6 The use of action research as a framework for developing teachers' professional practice

Accepting the use of communicative approaches as an appropriate goal, this study addresses the means to achieve this goal. Action research (AR) has great potential in addressing the envisaged barriers. Firstly, any methods or approaches should be adjusted to practitioners' own particular contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Ur, 2013a). AR often seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice within practitioners' contexts (Peason & Bradbury, 2001). It allows researchers to study practice within their own contexts, as Norwich (2000) suggests, and generate knowledge from researching in the context (Robinson, 1993). Practitioner knowledge can be developed in the spiral processes of plan, observation, action, evaluation and conceptualisation where reflection takes place all the time (Wallace, 1991; Haggarty & Postlethwaite, 2003).

AR is also compatible with the reflective model. The reflective model has similar elements to AR, namely, plan, action, observation and reflection (Wallace, 1998; Burn, 1999). Thus it is seen to provide a practical framework on which to base a

teacher education programme. It is anticipated that– through this action research investigation achieving insights from the classroom– the findings may provide improvements in the delivery of formal English education.

1.3 The significance of the study

For over forty years, the importance of communicative approaches in SLA has resulted in key scholars in TESOL constantly encouraging policy makers and ministries of Education all over the world to embrace them. However, there are few studies which use action research to explore the barriers to their implementation in the classroom and finding solutions to it. This current study sets out to investigate this research gap in the context of Taiwan. It also addresses Carless' (2003) appeal for research into how teachers learn to implement an innovation through their classroom practice, an important issue that has been neglected in the literature. This is one of the few studies which-- beyond investigating issues in implementing an innovation-- also makes an effort to solve problems arising in the process.

Another research gap lies in the investigation of EFL secondary school students' perceptions of foreign language teaching. Few studies set out to compare teachers' perceptions of effective foreign language teaching with those of their learners (Kern, 1995 in Brown 2009; Brown, 2009). Among this limited number of studies, most are focused on university students, e.g. Brown (2009), Tok (2010) and Hsu (2015). Secondary school students' views have rarely been investigated. Based on the assumption that students' views matter, this study interviewed the students to stimulate reflection on their real experiences, rather

than require them to respond to hypothetical questions as have most past studies on learners' attitudes.

Apart from the potential to address research gaps, the current study aims to contribute to practical knowledge. Carr (2007) argues that the purpose of educational research is to contribute to the development of knowledge. He believes that educational research should be a 'practical science'. 'Practical', for Carr, means 'seek[ing] to generate rational knowledge that will have a significant and worthwhile effect on the decisions and judgments of educational policymakers and practitioners' (p. 271). Biesta and Burbules (2003) contend further that educational research should produce knowledge which is relevant for practitioners, as well as for policy makers. Action research can contribute to the generation of such knowledge (Robinson, 1993).

The current research is conducted within an interpretive framework which is usually considered not to be capable of being generalized (Hammersley, 2003). However, given that the implementation of communicative approaches has proven to be widely problematic in EFL contexts, another value of this research lies in its broad application among EFL countries. The findings of this research could shed light on the aspect of L2 teaching in a variety of similar contexts, and could be useful for educational policymakers, practitioners and teacher educators.

1.4 Research aim

So far the conclusion can be drawn that the implementation of communicative approaches is too difficult to leave to a practitioner alone. Therefore, the main

purpose of this current research is to work with teachers in adapting the main features of the approaches to their own appropriate pedagogy within their existing social-cultural and social-political contexts. Jarvis and Atsilarat (2005) argue that communicative approaches should be replaced by a context-based approach. This view has much in common with 'situated pedagogy' (Ur, 2013a). Ur (2013a) specifies the 'situations' which teachers need to seek to balance, including learner characteristics, methodological principles, curricular requests, and other local needs and constraints. It is necessary for teachers to have ongoing professional support to achieve this balance (Walsh & Wyatt, 2014).

Action research can reach this aim by enabling practitioners to try out, reflect on and evaluate findings in projects tailored to schools' unique contexts (Haggarty & Postlethwaite, 2003). Given that teacher learning involves complex processes and the implementation of communicative approaches may be problematic, it is necessary to set up a teacher development programme to assist teachers with developing and implementing a context-sensitive communicative approach. Employing action research is an appropriate approach to investigating how a teacher development programme can assist teachers, since improvements can be made progressively over several reflective cycles (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1999). This study investigates the ways in which a reflective action research project involving a teacher development programme can help teachers realign their beliefs in the practice of communicative approaches, develop their practitioner knowledge in the approaches, and finally achieve a synergy between their beliefs and practice within their own particular teaching contexts. In full awareness of the complexity of teacher learning, the study does not aim to make the learning happen but to document the process honestly.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

This thesis comprises seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 will introduce the social, cultural and historical context of the study. I will outline first the Taiwanese national curriculum guidelines, followed by the status quo of English teaching in classrooms, and finally explain the current teacher education/development programmes.

Chapter 3 provides the literature review, organised into four parts; the first part clarifies what the specific communication approaches, CLT and TBLT mean and identifies their key features. The second part discusses how to develop a framework to operationalise these key features, in order to observe and evaluate teachers' knowledge growth. The third section aims to examine the main factors which, according to past research, have impeded the implementation of the approaches. The final part elaborates the theoretical framework for the teacher development programme.

Chapter 4 presents the design of this study including philosophical assumptions, methodology, research methods and research questions. The data collection procedure and analysis procedures will be explained, followed by a discussion of the validity and reliability of the study, as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter 5 reports the findings in the order of the stages in the study: the preparation stage, the main stage and the evaluation stage. The first part presents the baseline data including the background information of the participants, their perceptions towards English teaching and learning, and the teachers' practice before the intervention. The second part illustrates each teacher's development at each cycle of the main stage. The final part presents

data collected for the purpose of understanding the students' views towards the intervention, and their school examination results.

Chapter 6 discusses the findings in order to address the research questions. It is structured according to the three research questions. Chapter 7, the final chapter, will draw conclusions and discuss implications. There is a summary of main findings, followed by a discussion of the implications for practitioners, teacher educators and policy makers. The limitations of the study are also discussed and suggestions made for future research. Finally, this thesis ends with a discussion of the contributions it makes to knowledge in the field.

Chapter 2 Context of the study

This study investigates the application of the communicative approaches in the context of Taiwan, with the aim of generating practical knowledge which may also contribute to other contexts. To this end, providing a detailed description of the research context is very important. This chapter presents the social, cultural and historical contexts of English education in Taiwan. It begins with a description of the national curriculum guidelines, followed by an explanation of English teaching in classrooms and beyond, and finally explains Taiwan's teacher education/development programmes.

2.1 National curriculum in Taiwan

This section introduces the relevant Taiwanese national curriculum guidelines, including school and parallel systems, English education reforms and English national curriculum guidelines.

2.1.1 School and parallel systems

Following the national curriculum guidelines of Taiwan, both elementary school and junior high school stages are compulsory education. Taiwanese students go to elementary/primary school (Grade/Year 1-6) at age 7, followed by junior high school (Year 7-9). After 9 years of compulsory education, they can choose to study further in senior high school. All levels of schools can be provided by private or public sectors, but both are supervised by the government Ministry of Education (MOE) department, and these formal schools' curricula should follow the national curriculum guidelines.

Another system paralleling this hierarchical system is that of supplementary schools, also known as 'Buxiban' or cram schools, which are provided by profit-oriented individuals or school-like organisations without accreditation. They design their own curricula and are not regulated by the MOE. These private schools have developed two styles: the traditional one is so-called 'cram schools' which focus on academic subjects and support students to gain entry to a better school by improving their skills in taking tests on these subjects (Liu, 2012). The other kind focuses on developing performing talent, such as dance and music. They usually provide entry classes and continuously train learners to reach high levels. 'Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYL)' has become a huge market for the latter kind of supplementary school. Primary school or younger children go there to begin learning the language and developing English language abilities.

2.1.2 English education reforms

Globalisation has had a tremendous impact on education policies and the principles of language teaching in Taiwan (Nunan, 2003). In order to meet the Taiwanese developmental needs, the government has kept up the global trends of educational reforms and has revised the curriculum frameworks (MOE, 2001). First, governments are introducing English as a compulsory subject at a younger and younger age. They implemented English courses in Grade 5 and Grade 6 in the school year 2001. In recent years, the demand for English speaking workers has increased dramatically in all professions and public demand for school reforms has been growing. In response to public opinion, in 2005, the MOE officially announced that the English would now be taught once a week from

Grade 3 onwards. Six English classes taught per week in junior high school (each class is 45 minutes).

To improve the teaching of English, the communicative approach has become the central pillar of government guidelines. The national curriculum guidelines for the subject of English (hereafter referred to as the Guidelines) are introduced below.

2.1.3 English national curriculum guidelines

The English Guidelines are recorded in the publication of *the Guidelines of Language Arts-- English in Grade 1-9 Curriculum of Elementary and Junior High School Education* (MOE, 2001). The educational reforms of the curriculum in 2001 include three core goals of the national English curriculum:

- to cultivate in students the basic ability to communicate in English and to apply this ability to real situations
- to develop interests in-- and methods of-- learning English and to develop students' capacity of autonomous and effective learning
- to foster both indigenous awareness and a global perspective; to understand, compare and respect different cultures

It is clear from these aims that the government places communicative approaches or CLT at the centre of the curriculum. The curriculum also provides 'Implementation Guidelines' including teaching methods, materials and assessments. These state explicitly that teachers should avoid focusing on abstract grammar knowledge. The curriculum emphasises the function of

communication through teacher-students interaction and pair work. It suggests a bottom-up approach, through practical, interesting topics and content to achieve the three core goals.

In addition, the Guidelines state that teachers need to be flexible, and to make adjustments according to the specific circumstances regarding curriculum implementation and the needs of students. They clearly indicate that students' learning pace and interests take precedence over the teaching schedules. The government requests that teachers pay attention to the difference in students' ability levels and suggests they implement remedial teaching programmes. These guidelines remain the same to date (MOE, 2016).

2.1.4 Materials and assessments under the guidelines

The MOE also provides guidelines about the materials used in classes. Since the beginning of this century, textbooks have been compiled by private publishers, rather than the central government. The Guidelines provide the principles of material compilation including the selection of topics and content in textbooks and also the design of teaching-learning activities. The MOE has produced a standard 1200 word vocabulary list on which compilers are to base their materials. Schools may select their own textbooks from all the versions approved by the authority/agency in the MOE in charge of review and approval. This usually allows teachers to make their own decisions. This 'chain of events' in the production and use of textbooks is very similar to that which Richards (1998) described for many countries: the MOE sets test formats and curriculum guidelines, and publishers produce textbooks according to the guidelines. Procedures are set at the level of local schools, by which teachers review and

select textbooks.

As the Guidelines prescribe, most versions of textbooks are layered syllabuses, with a primary structural syllabus underlying a topical syllabus in a strict linear order. Scope and sequence charts are usually shown on the first pages of the student book (see Appendix 2.1 for an example). Recent years have seen a gradual increase in the inclusion of elements of communicative approaches in textbooks. Most textbooks begin every lesson with conversations, followed by a reading text, with form-focused instruction and pattern drills coming later. However, hardly any interactive tasks or activities are provided either in the student book or teachers' manual. A typical textbook contains nine units to be completed in one semester (around four and a half months).

Testing and assessment is another area where responsibility is shared between the MOE and the individual schools. The guidelines state that schools are responsible for students' academic achievement assessments; assessments should be conducted through diverse methods, emphasizing both formative and summative assessment. Teachers develop tests for their students. Over the course of one semester, there are usually two mid-term examinations and one final examination. Therefore, three units need to be completed before an examination.

The high-stakes test, the *'Basic Achievement Test for Junior High Students'*, which is taken at the end of junior high school, is compiled by the MOE in conformance with the Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines. Students' scores on this test are referred to in the criteria for admission to high schools. Education in Taiwan has gone through several reforms; however, the essence of the national test remains much the same. The test still only tests students' vocabulary,

grammatical knowledge and reading comprehension omitting listening and speaking. This pattern remains the same as 30 years ago when I took the test, though much simplified: the major change is that the test now is composed of only multiple choice questions (Lee, 2010).

2.2 English teaching in Taiwanese classrooms

Having introduced the curriculum guidelines, I now discuss how they translate into pedagogical realities.

2.2.1 Teachers' busy school life

A junior high school teachers' schedule is somewhat as Van Manen (1995: 5) describes: 'Then there are the daily morning "student needs" conferences, lunch hour supervision, phone calls to and from parents, and all kinds of other ad-hoc meetings.'. As for class teachers, they need to sign and write teacher-parent communication books on a daily basis. Pastoral issues may arise among teenagers, and need to be dealt with by high school teachers. Deducting a week for mid-term examinations, usually leaves only five weeks to complete three units. My own experience and discussions with colleagues have demonstrated that many English teachers have to work very hard to keep up with the syllabus, in order to prepare students for the tests.

2.2.2 Mismatch between curriculum guidelines and pedagogical realities

Although the national guidelines emphasise communicative and student-centred

approaches, traditional methods, such as Grammar-translation and Audio-lingual methods, are still dominant in Taiwanese English classrooms (Savignon & Wang, 2003; Hsu, 2015). This means that a mismatch exists between curriculum rhetoric and pedagogical realities. Although few studies have investigated this gap in Taiwan, I have experienced this gap as a learner and teacher of English in Taiwan.

Education in Taiwan is usually teacher-centred, test-centred and textbook-centred (Aldridge *et al.*, 1999), similar to China (Li & Walsh, 2011). There are several explanations for these emphases. Teachers in Taiwan often refer to the time constraints in class, which lead them to the conclusion that teacher-centred instruction is the most efficient way to deliver knowledge. In addition, they claim students are used to this mode of learning (Aldridge *et al.*, 1999). Teachers feel that they need to follow textbooks closely. This study explores whether this is still the case.

Although the entrance tests have become multiple choice questions, the locally set school mid-term exams still require students to recite spellings and translate. Multiple choice, cloze testing, sentence transformation and translation are the most popular modes of tests and practice in Taiwan. The test patterns may result in the neglect of students' communication abilities in the classrooms due to the washback effect, i.e. teaching for the test (Hsu, 2015).

2.2.3 Unsatisfactory formal school teaching results and cram schooling

Taking into consideration the combination of issues related to teachers' methodology and the patterns of the national tests, it is possible to conclude that

students do not learn English effectively in classrooms. Further evidence for this can be drawn from the number of pupils going to cram schools, and from data for international English proficiency tests. Most Taiwanese high school students and their parents rely heavily on paying private schools for after-school tuition. According to Liang (2010), in the 1970s, near 20% of students went to cram schools, rising to about 50% in the 1980s. By 2002, the most recent year for which data is available, more than 70% of junior high school students attended cram schools. The number of supplementary/cram schools has increased by fivefold over the last ten years. The attendance rate is set to increase further.

Poor learning outcomes from public schools are also evidenced by the statistics from the international English proficiency tests: TOEFL and TOEIC. The comparatively low average scores of Taiwanese test-takers in these tests have been highlighted in major newspapers and drew considerable public attention. For example, according to Chang (2010), the TOEFL score results showed that in the previous year, the average score of Taiwanese was only 74 out of 120, which ranked 20th among 30 Asian countries. The total score and the scores in all four sections were below the global average. TOEIC score results show that the gap between Taiwanese and Korean high school students' scores was wide (Wang, 2009). These poor school education outcomes are also noted by Nunan (2003), whose informants reported that the only children who could learn English were those whose parents were able to afford to send them to private language classes.

2.2.4 Mixed ability learners in high schools

Students begin studying English in the third year of primary school, for less than

two hours a week. There are increasing numbers of parents who are aware of the importance of English and who feel that this is not sufficient, so they send their children to English language schools at an early age. Consequently, the English abilities of junior high school students are mixed; some start learning English as young as 7 years old and reach varying levels of proficiency.

This raises the issue of how teachers can use one textbook to deal with mixed ability learners. The literature suggests that the communicative approaches have the potential to solve the problems of mixed-ability classes. Tasks, especially unfocused ones, are usually designed with the flexibility for learners to choose language themselves (Ellis, 2010), and thus are especially suited for mixed-level students.

However, instead of dealing with the challenge of mixed-ability learners, under time constraints school teachers seem to aim only to cover the curriculum, without carefully considering whether learning actually happens. Whether the learners are students who want to learn more, or students who fall behind in class, they depend on private cram schools.

2.2.5 The situation needs to be improved

China and East Asia have historically valued educational qualifications. Education continues to be highly valued, and many parents anticipate their children to attain a good school and university education. For almost every teenage student in Taiwan, their life priority is to prepare for high school and university entrance examinations (Yi & Wu, 2004). Students who aim to enter the few high quality but inexpensive public senior high schools and universities work

very hard. Yi and Wu (2004: 11) describe a typical day for a teenager in Taiwan 'to be at school, at various cram schools, then go home [at around 10 p.m.] and continue study'. My own experience would suggest that this is an accurate description. This is not an ideal lifestyle for teenagers. My study will make suggestions as to how students can learn English more effectively in public school.

2.3 Historical and the current teacher education/development

In this section, I discuss how pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes prepare English teachers to deliver the national curriculum guidelines.

2.3.1 Preparation for pre-service teachers

National Normal Universities were the only authorities to provide courses for pre-service teachers until 1995, when such courses began opening in many other universities. For example, the curriculum for the third or fourth year English majors who are trained to be high school teachers, the courses designs 21 credits/hours on general educational issues, and 5 credits on English pedagogy. This sort of five-credit model may be entitled 'TEFL materials and methods' or 'TEFL practicum'. According to Liou (2001), these courses are too limited to cover the basics that a student teacher needs to know.

Behaviourism highlighted by pre-service training may have an influence on the trainees' future teaching practice. In the 1990s, when I attended the pre-service course, my impression of the textbook for 'Educational Psychology' was that it

had a strong focus on Behaviourism. In the behaviourist view, learning an L2 was the psychological formation of habits, the creation of responses generated through repeated stimuli, as with the development of any skills. The implication of this approach is that of learning through repetition of the same structures by mechanical drilling. On reflection, this view had a profound influence on my teaching. I believe it also influenced other teachers who underwent such teacher education.

2.3.2 Continuous professional development

In terms of in-service programmes, the Guidelines indicate that the institutes responsible for teachers' education will provide programmes for the purpose of training eligible teachers for the Grade 1-9 Curriculum. Also, action research on curriculum and pedagogy can be granted with school subsidies. However, none of the teachers with whom I am acquainted were aware of this information.

Since 2001, based on the Guidelines, the '*Compulsory Education Advisory Groups*' have been organised at local government level and grouped by subject. The functions of the groups include organising regular seminars, setting up on-line teaching resources, and conducting peer observations and evaluations. The aims are to form learning communities and ongoing professional development. Highly skilled and experienced teachers have been nominated and appointed as teacher-consultants leading these events. Over the past ten years, the outcomes have differed among individual teachers and local groups (Du, 2011).

This would suggest that either pre-service or in-service teacher education in

Taiwan is not adequate for preparing English teachers to meet forms and standards, which are not just prescribed in the national guidelines, but are being promoted across the world. This study investigates whether this is the case. Given the demands of the busy school life and mixed-ability classes, teachers need more help in developing their practitioner knowledge in communicative approaches.

To summarise Chapter One and Two, the National Guidelines are congruent with global trends, whereby the goals of language teaching have been revised in order to cover learners' communication abilities, motivation, autonomous learning and cultural understanding. These revised goals conform with the potential of communicative approaches. The main issue I have identified is that the Guidelines for communicative approaches are not realized in the classroom. The information from government documents has been presented here, and information from the relevant literature will be discussed in the following chapter. These sets of information contribute to hypothesising or conceptualising and planning the intervention.

Chapter 3 Theoretical frameworks and literature review

This chapter reviews the relevant literature and research in order to establish theoretical frameworks for the study. The research aim is to help teachers develop their practitioner knowledge in-- and implementation of-- communicative approaches through a teacher development (TD) programme. To serve this research aim, two theoretical frameworks are required. One framework must be designed to observe teachers' practice and to evaluate their knowledge growth. The other framework is needed to guide the TD programme, and to inform the methods used, in order to promote its success. The first part of this chapter theorises the first framework by clarifying what is meant by the specific of communication approaches, CLT and TBLT, and by identifying the key features which are highlighted by hypotheses and theories in the areas of SLA and applied linguistics. This leads to the second part, developing a framework to operationalise these key features in order to observe and evaluate teachers' knowledge growth. The third part discusses factors impeding the implementation of communicative approaches, as evinced by past studies. The final part illustrates how the TD programme can be designed, given these potential obstacles.

3.1 Key features of communicative approaches

'Communicative approaches' in this study is used as a broad term to include both CLT and TBLT. A primary focus on meaning, and learner participation in interaction, can be identified as the key features of communicative approaches, across various definitions of the term. The theoretical foundations of these features of the approaches are supported by: knowledge of implicit and explicit

L2 learning; the input, output, and interaction hypotheses; and sociocultural theory. This section begins with definitions of communicative approaches, followed by elaboration on the key features of communicative approaches.

3.1.1 Definitions of communicative approaches

Communicative approaches had their origins about 50 years ago in Europe, where there was an urgent need for immigrants to learn foreign languages more effectively. This led to the Council of Europe developing a syllabus which focused on functional-notional concepts of language use. The term 'communicative approach' or CLT was coined to describe programmes that used such a syllabus (Kumaravadivela, 2006). During this period, CLT emerged, claiming to meet second language learners' communicative needs (Savignon, 1990; Richards, 2005). CLT methodologies, as Savignon (1990: 210) claims, are learning 'through learner participation in communicative events'.

CLT has been a dominant paradigm in the area of second language teaching since the 1970s. This has perhaps been due to the compelling nature of its underlying principles, one of which is that communication is key to learning English (Richards, 1998). Another possible reason was that the status and influence of CLT's proponents made it popular before sufficient studies had shown it to be more effective than grammar-based approaches (Richards, 1998). Outside the ESL world, however, there has been considerable discussion as to its acceptability and adaptability in a number of English as a foreign language (EFL) context (Kumaravadivela, 2006b; Mangubhai *et al.*, 2007; Dörnyei, 2009).

With the preference for CLT fading in the 1980s, the 'task' arose as a new focus.

Rather than regarding TBLT as a revolutionary approach, Kumaravadivela and others (e.g. Willis & Willis, 2007; Dörnyei, 2009) view it as a version of CLT. Richards (2005: 29) calls it as an 'extension of the CLT movement' with an aim to develop learners' communicative competence. Nunan (2004: 10) distinguishes between them, seeing CLT as 'a broad, philosophical approach to the language curriculum' while '[t]ask-based language teaching represents a realisation of this philosophy at the levels of syllabus design and methodology'. Similarly, Ellis (2003: 27) views tasks as an important feature of CLT; tasks are employed as a means for learners to experience how language is used in communication. Littlewood (2007: 243) simply regards TBLT as 'a development within the communicative approach'.

This study takes an integrative position: CLT is a broad approach and TBLT is one of the means to realise CLT, while both are communicative approaches with the goal of developing learners' communicative competence. Communicative competence includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence. It refers to the ability to follow linguistic rules and sociocultural norms accurately, to take cohesion and coherence into consideration, as well as to better manage conversation (Canale, 1983; Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Oxford, 1990).

Communicative approaches in this study are defined as those aiming to promote the development of L2 competence through participation in meaningful communicative events. 'Task', as defined by Ellis (2003) is considered to be comprehensive in this study, and informs it accordingly:

A task is a workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate

propositional content has been conveyed (p.16).

Among divergent definitions of a 'task', this study shares the view of Ellis (2003) that a task should put meaning as primary, and include an outcome for learners to achieve by allowing them freedom to choose from their own linguistic resources. A task does not intend to pursue completely authentic use of L2, but a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the ways in which language is used in the real world.

3.1.2 Primary focus on meaning

'Primary focus on meaning' has been highlighted in the key works on the subject of communicative approaches, CLT and TBLT. Savignon (1990) claims that CLT aims to promote L2 learners' functional competence through their participation in *meaningful* communicative events. In Skehan's (1996) definition of 'task', he puts *meaning* as primary, as does Ellis (2003), as cited above. Breen (1989) refers to a 'task' as a 'workplan' for a learning activity, aiming to engage the learners in *meaning*-focused language use.

3.1.2.1 The importance of focus on meaning (FonM) to SLA

The importance of focus on meaning (FonM) to SLA has its theoretical basis in applied linguistics, which suggests that it is necessary to understand 'implicit knowledge/learning' and 'explicit knowledge/learning' in order to understand SLA. The term 'Implicit learning' was coined by Reber (1967), referring to the process by which rules are learnt at an unconscious level (cited in Dörnyei, 2009). This

knowledge is acquired unconsciously and held unconsciously. It cannot be expressed explicitly; it can only be performed (Dörnyei, 2009; Ellis, 2006). Due to its rapidly and easily accessible nature, implicit knowledge is available for use in real, fluent communication. Most SLA researchers agree that L2 competence is primarily a matter of implicit knowledge (Ellis, 2006).

In contrast, explicit knowledge is acquired consciously, held consciously and can be expressed explicitly (Dörnyei, 2009; Ellis, 2006). Whether explicit knowledge (e.g. being able to explain grammatical rules, lexis) can be transferred to implicit knowledge (i.e. fluent language use) has created much debate, such as the famous interface debate (Storch, 2010). Whether researchers hold the Focus on meaning (FonM) position, or focus on form (FonF) position, is dependent upon their stance on the interface debate.

Krashen (1981, 1982) represents the main early proponent of FonM mode. He argued that structures could be acquired only through natural, developmental processes; learners could not successfully draw on their explicitly learnt knowledge for real, fluent communication. This is a non-interface position. Krashen (1982: 15) believes that '[explicit] learning has only one function, and that is as a 'monitor, or editor'. His Monitor hypothesis implies that conscious learning, such as formal rule-learning, plays only a limited role in the use of a second language. In FonM mode learners are provided with abundant exposure to comprehensible and authentic L2 input, without any instruction on linguistic forms. This exclusive FonM mode forms the basis of the strong version of CLT (Spada & Lightbown, 2008), which provides learners with a naturalistic SLA environment without overt instruction of form (grammar).

In contrast to Krashen's non-interface position, FonF sits in the strong interface

position, which claims that explicit knowledge can be converted into implicit knowledge through practice. That is, learners can learn a rule as a declarative fact and then transform it into an implicit representation. Anderson's (1983) model, Active Control of Thought (ACT), is frequently used to illustrate how explicit and implicit knowledge work. ACT and the later enhanced version, Adaptive Control of Thought-Rational (ACT-R), theorise how a general skill is acquired, and they are considered highly relevant to SLA perspectives (in Dörnyei, 2009). These models of information processing approaches could describe how people move from declarative/explicit L2 knowledge (e.g. grammar rules and lexis) to automatised application of procedural/implicit knowledge (fluent L2 use) (Dörnyei, 2009). To apply this model to FonF mode, discrete-point grammar teaching is usual in class, and time is mostly spent working on isolated linguistic structures. Classes typically follow a predetermined syllabus, developed externally by a syllabus designer or textbook writer (Long, 2000).

Neither of these two extreme positions is fully supported by theoretical papers or empirical studies. FonM has been criticized with respect to the following points. First, Dörnyei (2009) claims that implicit learning does not seem to work efficiently when learners wish to master an L2 at older age. Long (2000) considers the Critical Period Hypothesis, which refers to the notion that there is a specific and limited time period for language acquisition to be a plausible explanation. Second, as Long (2000) points out, FonM mode (such as immersion programmes) can only provide learners with positive evidence, i.e., simply from exposure to input. Ungrammaticality in L2 (e.g. *He closed quickly the door) appears to be unlearnable from positive evidence alone, since such grammatically incorrect structure does not necessarily cause communication breakdown, learners may remain unaware that they are making these errors.

There has not been sufficient or convincing empirical evidence to support FonM, either. Some studies have shown that FonM may lead to unsatisfactory results regarding the production of formal, accurate language. One example is Swain's (1985) research on learning outcomes in a French immersion programme. She points out that after as many as twelve L2 immersion years in the classroom, some graduate students' productive skills could not be compared with native speakers. However, their comprehension ability of the L2 was indistinguishable from their native-speaker age peers. Similar results can be found in Pavesi (1986), Schmidt (1983), and others studies on adult learners (cited in Long, 2000). Although recently other meaning based programmes or approaches, such as content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and content-based language learning (CBLL), have been introduced, such programmes are no longer insisting on monolingual and pure FonM (De Graaff *et al.*, 2007).

However, FonM also benefits L2 learners in other ways. Swain (1985) found that FonM was beneficial to learners' comprehension ability. In addition, Dörnyei (2009: 164) comments that implicit learning still has a place in 'fine-tuning, integrating, and automatizing the newly learnt material'. That is, after a new stimulus is explicitly presented, implicit learning makes incremental cumulative changes in every subsequent occasion of use towards the automatization process. Furthermore, some researchers assert that complex L2 structures are primarily implicitly acquired. This view and other theories regarding implicit learning are still subject to debate (Dörnyei, 2009).

The other extreme, FonF, is supported for the following reasons. FonF draws on Schmidt's (1990) Noticing hypothesis, which posits that learning does not occur without noticing. In most cognitive psychologists' views, learning does not take

place without attention (Leow, 2007), which is needed to make it possible to convert input into intake.

A number of studies have investigated this idea. De Graaff (1997) investigated the effects of explicit grammar instruction on the acquisition of an artificial language. The result shows that 54 Dutch native speakers who had accepted explicit grammar instruction scored higher on both post-tests. Another often cited work examining FonF is Norris and Ortega's (2000) meta-analysis. Drawing on 49 studies, they conclude that explicit instruction led to more gains in learning target structures than were achieved by implicit instruction, and that these positive effects were more enduring. However, according to Storch (2010), most of the studies, including those in Norris and Ortega's (2000) meta-analysis, mainly test explicit knowledge. That is, there is a lack of convincing evidence that explicit instruction on forms can result in learners' developing the ability to use grammar correctly and fluently in speech (Ellis, 1993; Scrivener, 2005; Dörnyei, 2009).

At most, FonF narrowly covers grammatical competence (Canale & Swain, 1980), which alone does not guarantee communication skills (Savignon, 1972). Discrete-point form instruction contributes little to learners' sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence (Savignon, 1972). The Grammar-translation method presents an almost pure manifestation of an explicit teaching approach, with hardly any elements of implicit learning. This 'read-and-translate' approach can easily be followed in a large-size classroom and can be assessed by multiple-choice tests. As Dörnyei (2009) concludes, it can be delivered without teachers using L2 fluently; thus it has been gaining popularity worldwide.

Arguing that FonM fails to lead to full native-like competence and that FonF may not meet learners' own internal syllabus, Long (1981) proposes a third mode suggesting that a form is only acquired when learners engage in meaning-focused activities. He draws on the psycholinguistic concept of 'internal syllabus', which refers to how the learners' built-in language system (rather than a predetermined external linguistic system) determines which forms they required, and the order in which they acquire them. When they encounter problems as they work on communicative tasks, their attention is briefly shifted to linguistic code features, and this process triggers the learning process. To distinguish between the two modes, he initiated the discrete-point form instruction as focus on forms (FonFs, with an 's'), and this mode as focus on form (FonF, without 's'). My study applies Long's (1981) terms on three instruction modes or positions: focus on meaning (FonM), focus on forms (FonFs) and focus on form (FonF). In FonF, learning is determined by learners' own internal syllabuses and current processing capacity (Long, 2000). That is, when students' comprehension or production problems arise incidentally in lessons, their temporary attention shifts to forms. FonF is one of the methodological principles in TBLT (Long, 2000; Ellis, 2010).

Long's (2000) definition makes it clear that FonF gives priority to meaning, drawing attention to the linguistic apparatus only when necessary. In FonF, form e.g. a grammar rule, is dealt with during-- and embedded in-- meaning-based lessons. That is, FonF occurs incidentally as a function of the interaction of learners. Ellis (2008) believes that true interlanguage development can only take place when acquisition happens incidentally, as a product of the effort to communicate. Ellis (2010) and Willis and Willis (2007) all explain further why it is necessary to put meaning as primary. With learners' already been primed to

focus on a particular form, it would be difficult for them not to think about the form; as a result, they would fail to engage in real time communication.

3.1.2.2 The integration of FonM and FonFs and communicative approaches

The integration of form-focused instruction and meaningful communication has been demonstrated in programmes of communicative approaches for over 20 years (Spada & Lightbown, 2008). FonFs or FonM alone is not sufficient for L2 acquisition; one's weakness happens to be the other's strength. It has been suggested that eclecticism is the optimum means of teaching a language (e.g. Long, 1997; Thornbury, 1999; Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004; Harmer, 2007; Spada & Lightbown, 2008; Dörnyei, 2009). TBLT can bridge the gap between form and meaning, as Prabhu (1987) states, 'a key rationale for TBLT is that form is best acquired when the focus is on meaning' (in Carless 2009: 51). Activities which follow this principle, inherent in communicative approaches, engage learners primarily in meaning, whether there is any instruction on form during or after the activity (as in a weak version of CLT/TBLT) or not (as in a strong version of CLT/TBLT). Ellis (2003) distinguishes between unfocused tasks and focused tasks. Unfocused tasks do not preset specific language features for learners to use, but they are able to predict a cluster of features. On the other hand, focused tasks are designed for learners to use some specific language features.

Long's FonF mode can be considered to be a strong version of TBLT. In his revised interaction hypothesis, Long (1996) states that while comprehensible input and meaningful interaction provide the raw material for language acquisition, they also provide the ideal context for spontaneous (i.e. integrated)

attention to linguistic form. The negative feedback which learners receive through interaction brings any problematic linguistic features to their immediate attention, and giving them opportunities to try speaking correctly.

Long's reactive stance would seem congruent with some theories of SLA; however, it may be difficult to implement in practice, especially in classes with learners of different abilities, or when errors in spoken English go unnoticed because they do not lead to any breakdown in communication (Doughty & Williams, 1998). To complement Long's stance, Doughty and Williams (1998) promote another pedagogical choice in the area of focus on form, i.e. proactive FonF. This proactive stance allows preselected forms in the design of tasks, providing learners with the language that they can use in communicative activities. The proactive mode may be particularly suitable in the context of countries such as Taiwan, where the official syllabus and textbooks have to be followed closely.

Oxford and Lee (2007), drawing on DeKeyser's concept, further define two modes of FonFs: FonFs-explicit deductive and FonFs-explicit inductive. The latter is similar to a weak version of TBLT. 'FonFs-explicit deductive' refers to instruction in which rules are provided by teachers. The grammar-translation method embodies this mode (Ellis, 2002; Oxford & Lee, 2007). In contrast, 'FonFs-inductive', is more learner-centred: teachers do not provide rules but present conditions in which learners discover grammatical rules for themselves.

One main feature of the FonFs-explicit inductive mode is explicit presentation of the examples with the target structure; one way of presenting the structure is to put it within a communicative context. This is similar to a version of a task in a TBLT, i.e. 'interpretation activities', proposed by Ellis (2010: 44). Activities here

refer to a term covering both tasks and exercises because the activities do not conform entirely to his definition of a task. Combining the modes of instruction, the following diagram (Figure 3.1) shows their positions on the explicit-implicit instruction continuum.

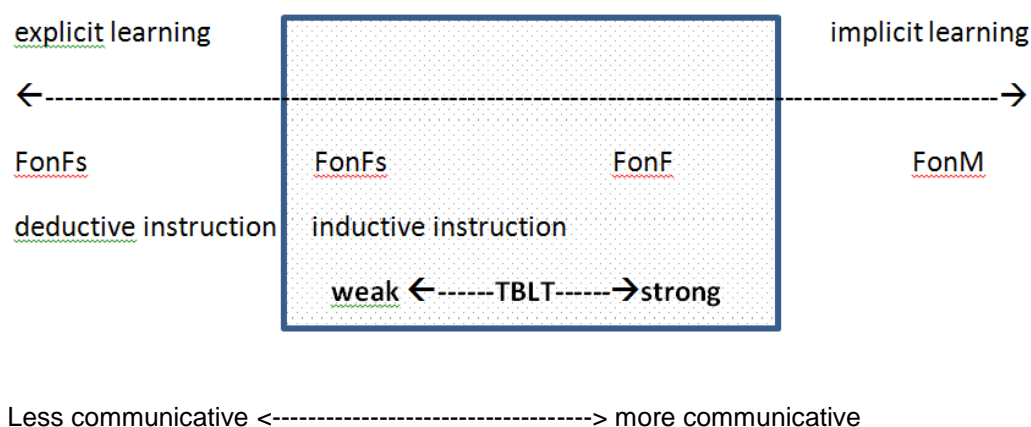


Figure 3.1 The explicit-implicit instruction continuum

In this continuum, the grey area indicates where a task is possible. Long's version of a task-based approach is classed to a strong version of TBLT. On the other hand, alternative types of tasks lie in between the continuum as the grey area in the diagram shows, that is, tasks underlying the inductive FonFs mode. Two types of these tasks: consciousness-raising (CR) tasks and interpretation activities are introduced below.

CR tasks are tasks that provide students with written or spoken input from which they need to find out particular features of the language, such as how a particular grammatical structure works or how a text is organised. Learners are required to communicate with peers in the target language in order to work out the rules for themselves. This communication element makes CR activities count as a task (Ellis, 2010). Fotos and Ellis' (1991) study on Japanese college

students found that the group who accepted CR tasks worked out the rules for themselves as accurately as the group who were taught the form. Amirian and Sadeghi (2012) compared the effect of traditional pattern drill practice of grammar with that of CR tasks on senior high school students in Iran. They conclude that CR tasks in grammar teaching achieved better results than the traditional approaches. CR tasks not only make specific generalizations about language available to learners, but more importantly, help them to build these abilities applying whenever and wherever learners encounter language problems (Willis & Willis, 1996).

Interpretation activities include input-enrichment activities and structured input activities. Input-enrichment activities put the target structure to be proceeded incidentally. Figure 3.2 below shows an example (Reinders, 2005 in Ellis, 2010: 45):

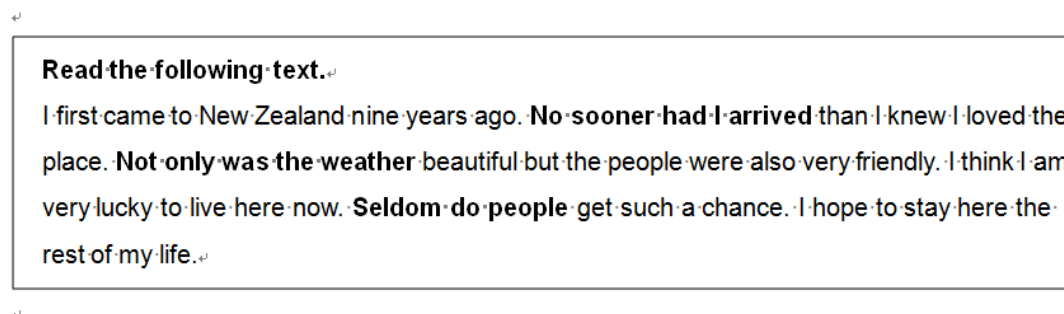


Figure 3.2 An input-enrichment activity

A similar view to the concept of input-enrichment activities can be found back in 1970. In O'Neill's *English in Situations*, there was an example to present say with reported speech:

A factory needs workers. Yesterday Bill read their advertisement in the paper. It said these things:

“We are a very large firm, pay very high wages, and have a good pension scheme.”

Bill is at the factory today. He now knows that all those things are not true. At this moment he is saying these things to the manager:

“YOU SAID YOU WERE A VERY LARGE FIRM but you are a really small one!

YOU SAID YOU PAID HIGH WAGES but they are really very low.

YOU SAID YOU HAD A GOOD PENSION SCHEME. You really haven't one at all.” (cited in Thornbury, 1999: 51).

Figure 3.3 An input-enrichment activity

As it can be seen in the examples, certain features are designed in an input-enrichment activity: high frequency (a feature of FonM) and salience of the target structure to assist noticing (a feature of FonFs). Some suggestions are made to turn the activities to tasks. Teachers can let students discuss (in pairs) the features of the highlighted structure including what they are and the difference they make in meaning. For instance, for the first activity, one task could be: *Which terms make the subject-verb inversion? List these terms.*

The structured input (SI) activities/tasks are called this because the input has been designed to make the targeted forms or structures more noticeable. Lee and VanPatten (2003: 142) define structured input as ‘input that is manipulated in particular ways to push learners to become dependent on form and structure to get meaning’. One type of these activities is referential activities which require learners to pay attention to form so as to acquire meaning. When learners are engaged in structured input activity, their attention is drawn to the relevant form-meaning connection (Leow, 2007:28). The following example would enable learners to make the connection between the form of modal verbs and their semantic function (possibility) (Figure 3.4) During the activities, learners should

be provided with immediate and explicit (Ellis, 2010) feedback or implicit feedback about whether their answers are correct (Leow, 2007).

Listen to the sentences about people who have Alzheimer's disease. Indicate whether each sentence describes something that is DEFINITE (write D) or POSSIBLE (write P).

1. People with Alzheimer's disease **forget** things all the time.
2. For example, they **may forget** even very simple words.
3. They **might prepare** a meal and then forget they cooked it.
4. They **can even get** lost on their street.
5. They **put** things down and forget where they have put them.

Figure 3.4 A structured input activity (Ellis, 2010:45)

Referential activities are meaning-based activities that have a right or wrong answer, as the example above. Learners' answers can provide the teacher with feedback to understand the learners' ability to mapping the form and meaning. Learners are also provided with prompt feedback about the correctness of their answers. Another type of SI activity, affective activities, requires learners to offer an opinion, express a belief or make a judgment.

Regarding empirical evidence, Sanz and Morgan-Short's (2004 in Leow, 2007) experimental study shows that explicit grammar explanation provided either prior to or during structured input practice did not facilitate the acquisition. Therefore, they concluded that structured input practice itself was sufficient for acquisition; additionally, explicit grammar information via feedback, implicitly or explicitly, would contribute to L2 develop. Tanaka (in Ellis, 2005) found that input practice (such as SI activities) led to better comprehension of the target structure and, in the long term, to production that was just as accurate. In other words, the input

practice helped learners in both input and output, but the production practice only helped output.

Although the intention is to “teach” a grammatical structure, Lee and VanPatten (2003) also stress the importance of adding the element of being truly communicative in those activities. This can be accomplished by information gap tasks. When new information is exchanged, the activities can be considered communicative.

To summarise FonFs and FonM briefly, FonFs instruction is believed to be inadequate for learners’ production in L2 while FonM is blamed for failing to help learners in terms of accuracy. As Dörnyei (2009) summarises, the successful co-operation of explicit and implicit learning is the key to learning L2 efficiently. However, it is important to remember that language acquisition is an evolving dynamic phenomenon rather than a single event that responds to a single instance of exposure to input or given by a form-focused instruction, as Spada and Lightbown (2008) recommend. Similarly, Lantolf (2010: 346) believes that the nature of any learning outcome is unpredictable since 'learning depends heavily on the significance individuals assign to the various activities they participate in ... We can only compose the circumstances and conditions that promote learning'. Communicative activities and tasks can be and should be designed to serve this purpose.

3.1.3 Learner participation in interaction

Learner participation in interaction is another key feature in communicative approaches. When defining a task, Ellis (2003) highlights the necessity of

interaction. The goal must be achieved through using L2 in interaction. Learning cannot happen when learners rely heavily on paralinguistic means or on L1 to complete a task. Extending Skehan's definition of a task, Willis and Willis (2007) add the notion of engagement as an important feature. The rationale is clear as they comment: '[t]his is because without engagement, without genuine interest, there can be no focus on meaning or outcome. Learners have to want to achieve an outcome, they have to want to engage in meaning' (p. 13).

The importance of interaction is evident in theories related to SLA. Interaction can generate more comprehensive input (input and interaction hypotheses), promote learning form by noticing interlanguage gaps (interaction and output hypotheses), and is a mediated process to promote learning (sociocultural theory, SCT), as explained below.

3.1.3.1 Interaction generates comprehensive input

Long's (1981, 1983) claim of the importance of negotiated interaction to SLA has been referred to as the interaction hypothesis. One basic function of interaction is that it can generate more comprehensible input by negotiation for meaning. In the process of meaningful interaction, when comprehension problems occur, both participants need to negotiate for meaning to make themselves comprehensible. Krashen (1981, 1982) contends that a language can be acquired only by the provision of comprehensible input, which is the tenet of the input hypothesis.

The interactional modifications are devices in negotiating for meaning, including the use of comprehension checks, confirmation checks and clarification requests

(Long, 1983). A comprehension check is the speaker's way of finding whether the interlocutor has understood something (e.g., "Do you follow me?"). A confirmation check is the speaker's way of ascertaining whether his/her understanding of the interlocutor's meaning is correct (e.g. "Do you mean...?"). A clarification request refers to a request made for assistance in understanding something the interlocutor said (e.g. "Can you say that again?").

Ellis *et al.* (1994) draw on past studies (e.g. Pica, 1992) which mainly used experimental methods and conclude that the belief that negotiation of meaning aids comprehension has largely been established; on the other hand, the claim that comprehension leads to acquisition was less convincing. A direct link between meaning negotiation and language acquisition was especially lacking convincing evidence; Ellis *et al.*'s (1994) dual-study in two Japanese high school classrooms found this might be the case. They explain it with the concept of built-in syllabus, which states that when, and only when individuals are developmentally ready (meeting their built-in syllabus), input can become uptake to become intake. That is, comprehensible input will only work if learners are developmentally ready to attend to the structures in the input (Ellis *et al.*, 1994). Mitchell and Myles (2004) also suggest a need for strong theoretical models to clarify the link between the two.

3.1.3.2 Interaction promotes learning form

In his revised interaction hypothesis, Long (1996) emphasises that meaningful interaction also provides the ideal context for spontaneous (i.e. integrated) attention to linguistic form. This revised interaction hypothesis constructs the

focus on form (FonF) teaching mode. In FonF, form-focused instruction comes reactively to learners. Only this reactive way can follow learners' own internal syllabuses and meet their current processing capacity (Long, 2000). Mackey, Abbuhl and Gass (2012) draw on the meta-analyses conducted by Lyster and Satio (2010), Li (2010) and Russell and Spada (2006), and summarise that interaction along with corrective feedback contributes to developing learners' lexical and grammatical knowledge.

The output hypothesis also stresses the important role of negotiated interaction to SLA in achieving accuracy of form (Swain & Lapkin, 1995). In her output hypothesis, Swain (1985) proposes that negotiated interaction 'needs to incorporate the notion of being pushed towards the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately' (pp. 248-9). In this view, output is not merely a final outcome of what has been learnt, but a source of learning itself (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). To be more specific, output triggers noticing, and noticing a problem, by external feedback (e.g. clarification requests) or internal feedback, pushes learners to modify their output. The noticing function of the pushed-output relates to the possibility that when communicating in a still developing target language, learners may encounter linguistic problems and this leads them to be aware of their knowledge gaps between what they want to say and what they can say. Knowing their knowledge gap may trigger an analysis of incoming data, i.e. a syntactic analysis of input, or it may trigger an analysis of existing internal linguistic resources in order to address their knowledge gap (Swain & Lapkin, 1995).

The pushed-output may activate learners' hypothesis-testing process, which relates to the possibility that the communicative process itself is a process of

experimenting with what works and what does not. When communication breakdown occurs or negative feedback is received, learners may test different hypotheses from their interlanguage, and this helps develop interlanguage. Additionally, the metalinguistic function of pushed-output relates to the possibility that interaction may lead a meaning-based processing to a form-based processing. In the process of interaction, learners may consciously think about language and its system (about phonology, grammar or semantics) to guide them to produce correct and appropriate output (Swain, 1995). Swain and Lapkin's (1995) research provide evidence on these functions of output by using young adolescent learners in a French immersion programme to think-aloud while producing L2 writing. The study found that the learners noticed gaps in their linguistic knowledge, and there was evidence of grammatical analysis triggered by output. Gass' (1997) research also supports that output has functions for learners to test their hypotheses and to draw their attention to form.

3.1.3.3 Interaction as a mediated process

The importance of dialogic interaction is also highlighted by sociocultural theory (SCT). SCT views learning as a mediated process. Children and unskilled learners are guided by collaborative talk, i.e. mediated through language. Learning happens when collaborative inter-mental activity shifts to autonomous intra-mental activity.

The foundation of SCT is activity theory, which claims that human behaviour results from the integration of socially and culturally constructed forms of mediation into human activity (Lantolf, 2006). The site where social and cultural

forms of mediation develop is the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD). The ZPD is a well-known and widely adopted construct which the initiator of SCT, Vygotsky, proposed (Lantolf, 2000a). It is a metaphor referring to the difference between the developmental level which a person can achieve alone, and the higher level of potential development with support from someone who is more capable (Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

In Vygotsky's view, level of learning can increase only by expert-novice interaction in the ZPD; more competent learners can assist less competent learners to move further through their area of potential growth (Oxford & Lee, 2007; Lantolf, 2000a). This view draws the attention to how to pair or group learners, a key activity in communicative approaches. Whilst Vygotsky underscored the role of more expert others in co-constructing ZPDs, one should also consider how a higher-level learner may benefit from pair work. It has been argued that there are advantages for both partners in a mixed-level pair. Porter (1986, cited in Lynch, 1996) argues that the more proficient learner gets practice in producing comprehensible output, and the weaker partner gains experience in negotiating meaning. Storch (2010) found that the same proficiency level groups (i.e. high-high, low-low) were more likely to form collaborative relationship and engage more in the task. The different results may be caused by different attributes of tasks and learner difference. Teachers need to adjust grouping according to these factors to raise learners' engagement.

The overview of the three hypotheses discussed above and SCT suggests that interaction for communication is important. As both Ellis (1999) and Oxford (2011) point out, by such two-way communication, more comprehensible output (production) is generated significantly through negotiation, feedback and

clarification from the participants. When language teachers prefer to provide one-way information, through a teacher-fronted approach, their learners usually lack the opportunities to communicate and to receive more input for facilitating comprehension. Also, as Swain and Larkin (1995) conclude, learners lose the benefits from feedback, which leads to reflection on their own productions.

3.1.3.4 The importance of participation to SLA

The extent of a learner's engagement in using an L2 influences the availability of language learning opportunity (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Activity theory may help to explain why research on the input, output and interaction hypotheses has given rise to a variety of different findings. According to it, every individual may come with various goals which may even differ from that of the task designer. Different goals result in their use of different approaches and involvement. Lantolf (2010) follows Vygotsky's sociocultural line and emphasises the function of participation. The implication for communicative tasks is that any benefit of task-based instruction on learning outcomes depends on the extent of learners' engagement in a task. Due to the unstable nature of activities, TBLT cannot guarantee to yield positive learning outcomes; what ultimately matters is how individual learners decide to engage with the task as an activity (Lantolf, 2010).

Therefore, a practical question becomes how teachers can engage their learners in participating in communicative activities. Kumaravadivelu (2003) provides some tactics, which include arranging topics for learners to share their individual opinions, and talk about something that matters to them. Something that is popular and interesting to them may also work well in engaging their learners.

Rubin (1975) recommends providing opportunities in class for learners to feel the need to communicate; this means providing motivation for them. She suggests classroom activities should be designed as situations (e.g. solving a problem) to serve this purpose.

Interaction supported by the three hypotheses and SCT provides grounds for group work where students are put together, providing input modification for each other and negotiating meanings with each other. Long and Porter (1985) find that group work promotes learner motivation. Crandall (1999: 234-5) explains that 'peer support can be a powerful motivator for shy, insecure or even uninterested students. In cooperative groups, individuals know that they can get feedback and assistance in making their contributions as clear, relevant and appropriate as possible'.

3.1.4 Outcome in task

In addition to the two key features discussed in the previous sections, a task has a goal to be achieved by learners, and this is the main difference between CLT and TBLT. Breen (1989) defines a task as a 'workplan', and Nunan (1991) extends this term to include three elements: *goals*, input (materials) and activities. As Breen highlights outcome or goal, Willis (1996: 23) defines tasks as 'always activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an *outcome*'. For the spot-the-difference task, for example, the outcome is identifying all the differences between two pictures (Ellis, 2003).

The emphasis on using the target language is essential. As Ellis (2003) cautions, learners can achieve an 'outcome' of a task without achieving an 'aim' of the task,

i.e. using the target language. They would simply show each other their lists. In this sense, task completion should be assessed in terms of content instead of outcome. In Ellis' (2003: 16) definition of a task, outcome should be 'evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed'. An 'aim' of a task is usually using the target language in interaction for promoting language acquisition, in this case, through communication with a peer. This view also reflects the distinction between task-as-workplan and task-in-process (Seedhouse, 2005), and highlights the importance of observing the process of doing a task.

3.1.5 Summary of the key features in communicative approaches

Having illustrated the three selective features of communicative approaches, namely, primary focus on meaning, interaction and involvement, and outcome, the main reason why these three features are sufficient to constitute the observation framework is that they have covered some other elements which are frequently believed to feature communicative approaches. Firstly, 'information gap', a key element to judge communicativeness of classes (Littlewood, 2007), is covered. The interaction here only refers to 'negotiated interaction'; for negotiated interaction to happen, there naturally need to be some information gaps between learners. Secondly, teacher-centredness or student-centredness is frequently a criterion for communicative approaches (Mangubhai *et al.*, 2005, 2007). It is unlikely that a lesson can be teacher-centred and at the same time meet the second criterion (e.g. encouraging learners to initiate and participate in meaningful communication in L2). The framework developed here puts interaction among students at the core; more students' involvement in interaction is considered more student-centred.

Thirdly, 'relate to the real-world' is also frequently highlighted in tasks (e.g. Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007; Skehan, 1996). For example, in identifying characteristics of a task, Willis and Willis (2007) believe the question needed to be asked: 'Does the activity relate to real world activities?' Long (2000) refers to tasks as the real world things people do in everyday life, for example, buying a bus pass, asking for directions. A workplan including an activity like this is creating some sort of relationship to the real world. Ellis (2003) distinguished situational authenticity and interactional authenticity. A task may be less authentic, such as asking students to describe a picture for their peers to draw it; nonetheless, the skills which the learners learn while they are negotiating their way to understand each other, i.e. interactional authenticity, would contribute to their skills in dealing with real-world activities (Ellis, 2003). In addition, meaningful interaction between the teacher and the students simulates the authentic meaningful exchanges of the real world (Tomlinson, 2014). Thus these three selective criteria contribute to the real-world language use. Also, to some extent, real-world language use will be covered since in this research context, the textbook follows a topic based syllabus, and in addition, the teacher may ask personalised questions.

The framework for this study does not include 'using authentic materials' due to the fact that textbooks often play an important role in EFL contexts (Richards, 1998). However, if teachers choose to introduce authentic materials, this will be noted.

3.2 The framework for observing and evaluating teachers' professional growth

The three features identified as the most crucial elements of communicative approaches seem to have the potential to be carried out in this research context. Thus they can be served as criteria to evaluate teachers' professional growth in communicative approaches. However, applying these features to operate in reality is not always straightforward (Skehan, 1996; Willis & Willis, 2007). This section begins with an overview of commonly used frameworks in past studies, followed by an illustration as to how the three features can be applied to develop the current study's observation scheme.

3.2.1 An overview of frameworks commonly used in past studies

This section reviews common frameworks used in past studies, including Mangubhai *et al.*'s list of CLT attributes, Littlewood's five-category continuum, Willis and Willis' characterisation of tasks, Spade, Frohlich and Allen's Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Scheme (COLT) and Kumaravadivelu's postmethod pedagogy.

3.2.1.1 Mangubhai *et al.*'s list of CLT attributes

Mangubhai *et al.* (2005, 2007) compiled a detailed list of attributes of CLT with an aim to provide a framework for teachers to plan and review their use of CLT in teaching foreign language. They adapted Joyce and Weil's (1994) framework of using constructs to describe different teaching models for familiarising teachers with the use of such models in classrooms. According to Mangubhai *et al.* (2007),

the framework has been used successfully to coach teachers in their use of some teaching models. Extending Joyce and Weil's constructs to suit the broad CLT approach, they include other constructs: for example, the principal goals, theoretical assumptions underlying the approach, and strategies (methods used with an approach). With this framework, they reviewed written texts regarding CLT, and compiled a detailed list of attributes of CLT. The list includes a wide range of the perspectives which are believed CLT should cover. For example, in their list, two principal goals are highlighted: to develop students' communicative competence in L2, and to encourage students use L2 productively and receptively in authentic exchanges.

Teachers' roles are also suggested: being a facilitator of communication processes and guiding, rather than being a transmitter of knowledge. The roles in CLT are also similar to an organiser of resources, analyst of student needs, counsellor/corrector, and group process manager. On the other hand, student roles, for example, should be active participants, negotiators of meaning and proactive team members. They also provide guidelines for teachers to react to students' questions, responses, and initiations, and so on, which are as follows:

- Encourages learners to initiate and participate in meaningful interaction in L2
- Supports learner risk taking (e.g. going beyond memorized patterns and routine expressions)
- Places minimal emphasis in error correction and explicit instruction on language rules
- Emphasizes learner autonomy and choice of language, topic
- Focuses on learners and their needs
- Encourages student self-assessment of progress
- Focuses on form as need arises

The framework has been used in investigating teachers' practical theories of CLT (Mangubhai *et al.*, 2007) and in comparing teachers' and researchers'

conceptions of CLT (Mangubhai *et al.*, 2005). However, it has not been applied to coach teachers in the use of CLT approaches in a teacher education programme, according to Mangubhai *et al.* (2007). The detailed list of CLT attributes may help teachers to understand communicative approaches and avoid misunderstanding. However, the advantage of being so detailed could also be a disadvantage for this research setting, if the list is set as criteria to evaluate the teachers' practice. The 62 attributes identified may discourage the teachers from voluntarily participating in the present study. They are more suitable to be used for reference only.

3.2.1.2 Littlewood's five-category continuum

Littlewood (2004) suggests a framework which aims to clarify what CLT and TBLT actually mean and how they are implemented in classrooms. It is a general belief that a communicative task involves learners to primarily focus on communicating meaning rather than on form. However, it is often impossible to divide clearly between activities with the focus on form and activities with the focus on meaning. Rather, it is more a matter of degree. For example, some activities may focus mainly on practising certain forms, but learners may still need to pay attention to meanings of words to complete the work. Thus, a continuum with varying degrees of focus on forms (FonFs) and/or meaning (FonM) is more suitable than a dichotomy. The continuum Littlewood constructs is divided into five sections with reference to communicativeness of activities. The labels across the top describe the categories from *non-communicative learning* in Box 1, progressed to *authentic communication*, Box 5 (from left to right). Activities can then be classified according to where they lie in the boxes,

as the diagram below shows.

Focus on forms ←		→ focus on meaning		
Non-communicative learning	Pre-communicative language practice	Communicative language practice	Structured communication	Authentic communication
Focusing on the structures of language, how they are formed and what they mean, e.g. through exercises, “discovery” and awareness-raising activities	Practising language with some attention to meaning but not communicating new messages to others, e.g. in “question-and-answer” practice	Practising pre-taught language in a context where it communicates new information, e.g. in information gap activities or “personalised” questions	Using language to communicate in situations which elicit pre-learnt language but with some unpredictability, e.g. in structured role-play and simple problem-solving	Using language to communicate in situations where the meanings are unpredictable, e.g. in creative role-play, more complex problem-solving and discussion

Figure 3.5 The continuum from focus on forms to focus on meaning Littlewood (2004: 322)

Deng and Carless (2009) applied Littlewood’s (2004, 2007) continuum as the theoretical framework for evaluating communicativeness of a Chinese English teacher’s classroom activities. They found it useful; in their words: ‘We believe we have illustrated that Littlewood’s matrix is a useful heuristic to document classroom activities along a continuum of communicativeness’ (p.131). However, the Communicative Continuum cannot be used as an only source for observing and evaluating the communicativeness of an activity. His continuum is based on the dimension of FonFs and FonM, but neglects the dimension of the degree of learners’ involvement. Littlewood (2004) is aware of this and combines the two dimensions, as the diagram below shows.

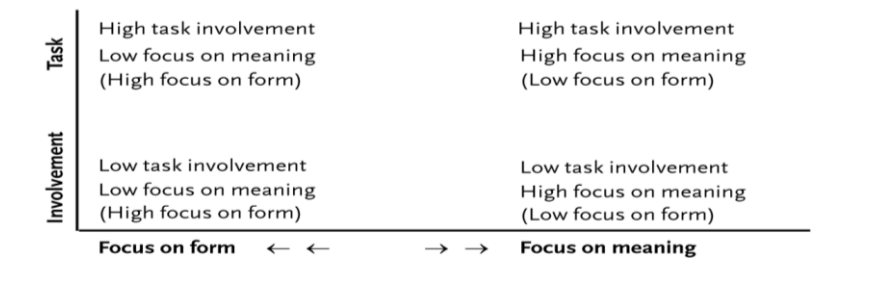


Figure 3.6 Two dimensions in task- based foreign language learning (Littlewood, 2004: 324)

The horizontal axis represents the continuum from FonFs to FonM, while the vertical axis upwards represents increasing involvement (or mind-engagement) in an activity. A form-focused language exercise can be carried out with high degree of learner involvement (top left corner) or low degree of learner involvement (bottom left corner). On the other hand, discussion or a role-play can be carried out with high degree of learner involvement (top right corner), or the other way (bottom right corner). The dimension regarding the degrees of learners' involvement helps to illustrate that even a highly meaning-focused activity as planned could involve low involvement, if the topic is not interesting to learners or instructions are incomprehensible. Therefore, it is necessary to consider these two dimensions together in evaluating classroom activities. Activities that fall in the top right corner are ideal for a teacher who aims to build a communicative classroom.

3.2.1.3 Willis and Willis' characterisation of tasks

Willis and Willis (2007) determine how task-like a given activity is by asking a set of questions. The more positive answers to each of these questions indicate the more task-like the activity is. The questions are:

- 1 Does the activity engage learners' interest?
- 2 Is there a primary focus on meaning?
- 3 Is there an outcome?
- 4 Is success judged in terms of outcome?
- 5 Is completion a priority?
- 6 Does the activity relate to real world activities?

These criteria are based on Skehan's (1996) definition. The first, second and sixth questions can also be applied to communicative activities, while the rest of questions are specifically for a task. They take a view that the features of focus-on-meaning and engagement should be a matter of extent, rather than being categorical; a view shared with Skehan (1998). As with Littlewood's framework, they do not distinguish whether this set of criteria is used to evaluate the task plan or its process. Moreover, for evaluating a teacher's knowledge growth in communicative approaches, a more operational framework is needed.

3.2.1.4 Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Scheme (COLT)

Spada and her colleagues set up a framework, 'Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Scheme' (COLT), to differentiate the communicative orientation of L2 classrooms (Fröhlich, Spada & Allen, 1985; Bacon, Spada & Frohlich, 1997). COLT consists of two parts. Part A records classroom practices and procedures of activities during the classroom observations. Part B analyses the verbal interactions between teachers and

students within activities after class. *Priori*-coding is applied to analyse the audiotape recordings of the class.

Part A covers five major parameters: activity, participant organization, content, student modality and materials. There are categories and subcategories under each parameter; for example, 'activity' includes drills, dialogues, repetition drills, conversations, etc. The categories and subcategories are put in the table to constitute the observation sheets. The task for observers is to firstly identify the type of activity, and check in the appropriate boxes under each of the other four major headings, in one-minute coding periods. Then the proportion of time spends on each category and subcategory is computed, e.g. a whole class vs group work, teacher-led vs student-led.

For the analysis, the authors select five features to characterise the degree to which the class is communicatively oriented. The selected categories are: group work, focus on meaning and any combinations of form, topic control by student alone or teacher and students, use of extended text, and use of semi- and non-pedagogic materials. Next they assign scores from 1 to 5, according to the percentage of time spent on each feature. By computing the scores from these features, the communicativeness of classroom is evaluated as a number.

Part B analyses communicative features of verbal interaction post hoc on recordings. It consists of seven features and their categories, such as use of the target languages. Each category is calculated as a proportion of its feature, for example, the percentage of L2 use within the feature and the percentage of L1 use. In addition to a descriptive comparison, the proportions are analysed with a computer software package to find out whether there are differences between programmes.

COLT may be suitable for comparing the start points of communicativeness of several different classrooms. Eleven studies have used COLT, and the authors believe that it can differentiate between more and less communicativeness oriented instruction (Kumaravadivelu, 1999). Another example is Lyster and Mori's (2006) study of using it as a framework to explore whether the use of the interactional feedback depends on the communicative orientation of L2 classrooms.

However, COLT is controversial in three aspects. Firstly, some parameters are problematic. One controversial parameter is student modality. Student modality does not directly address the issue of whether one skill practice was more communicative than another. The authors are aware of this, and do not include this parameter in final counting. They also notice that the parameter of use of Materials overlapped with 'topic control' to some extent. Secondly, it cannot be applied flexibly to different teaching contexts. Materials as a criterion is not suitable to this research context, where the teachers often believe that the textbooks must be followed. The use of authentic materials in the classroom can only be suggested. Thirdly, both parts rely much on a *priori* coding, which do not allow codes or themes to be constructed from the data (Kumaravadivelu, 1999).

3.2.1.5 Kumaravadivelu's postmethod pedagogy

Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2003) rejects the legitimacy of CLT or TBLT, and suggests teachers developing their particular context-sensitive pedagogy. He constructs a coherent framework, a postmethod pedagogy, aiming to replace any methods including CLT and TBLT. His framework consists of ten

macrostrategies and their corresponding microstrategies to guide teachers to carry out the postmethod pedagogy. Microstrategies encourage teachers to generate their own situation-specific, need-based micro strategies or classroom techniques.

However, his macrostrategies include many characteristics of communicative approaches. For example, Macrostrategy 1- *Maximize learning opportunity* is based on socio-cultural theory, highlighting learner involvement. Macrostrategy 3- *Facilitate negotiated interaction* appears to share the same base of the output and interaction hypotheses with communicative approaches. As participation and interaction are focuses in this study, these two macrostrategies can inform the framework of this study. Since his pedagogy has no place for textbooks, it is not a suitable framework to guide Taiwanese teachers.

3.2.2 Operationalising the key features to an observation framework

The previous section presented the commonly used frameworks, which either have some flaws in the design or have issues in implementing in this research context. Therefore, it is necessary to develop an observation framework to take the context into consideration. Informed by the principles of FonFs and FonM, the interdependence of interaction, input, output and participation, three key elements featuring communicative approaches are identified:

- 1 Whether there is a primary focus on meaning
- 2 To what extent the interaction and involvement are observed
- 3 Whether there is a communicative goal for learners to achieve (for evaluating a task)

This section discusses how these features can be operationalised in order to serve as criteria to observe classroom activities, and to evaluate teachers' professional growth in communicative approaches.

3.2.2.1 Primary focus on meaning in the dynamic nature of classrooms

Any view of meaning should take the dynamic nature of classroom discourse into consideration. This is similar to the concept of task-as-workplan and task-in-process (Seedhouse, 2005). A meaningful context can be predetermined by the teacher as a starting point, for example, a talk about the plan for spring vacation. The talk as planned can divert in the process of interaction, as a result of co-construction with learners. Allwright (1981) points out further that it is the language input generated in such processes that has the potential for learning to happen, rather than the input prepared by the teacher.

This dynamic view of meaning takes the nature of classroom discourse into consideration. It differs from Littlewood's (2004, 2007) Communicative Continuum, in which activities are categorised by degrees of FonFs and meaning in the design itself, without considering the dynamic nature of co-constructed meaning. Although more static, his observation framework still can contribute to this study. The aim of this current research is to work with the teachers to develop their knowledge. They are not expected to achieve this aim immediately. Therefore, Littlewood's Continuum can serve the function of gauging the progress which the teachers make in designing communicative activities. This study recorded and analysed the classroom discourse in one-minute coding periods. It is important to note that although Littlewood's framework is applied, it does not have an evaluative function. Either FonFs or

FonM activities have their pedagogical functions (Deng & Carless, 2009).

3.2.2.2 Observing learner participation

Learner participation in interaction is also a matter of extent, a view shared by Skehan (1998). A main drawback of COLT would be that both parts rely much on a *priori* coding, which do not allow codes or themes to be constructed from the data (Kumaravadivelu, 1999). As Kumaravadivelu (1999) suggests, the framework needs more detailed qualitative analysis to compensate. Taking a more holistic view, learner participation in interaction can be facilitated either by teachers' interaction with their learners in teacher talking time (TTT), or by activities which teachers design for communicative purposes. In Part 1 of COLT suggested whole class activities were less communicative than group work. However, many studies have explored how teacher talk can facilitate learners' involvement in interaction (e.g. Walsh, 2002; Cullen, 2002). It neglects the situation when group work may be restricted to some teaching contexts, and the teachers can develop own ways of creating communicativeness in teacher talk (e.g. the case in Sullivan, 2000, see below).

This framework integrates the concept of task-as-workplan and task-in-process (Seedhouse, 2005), unlike other frameworks. It can be applied to analysing classroom talk and pair/group work (Chen, 2014), as illustrated in Figure 3.7 below.



Figure 3.7 The outline of the observation framework

In these criteria, communicative approaches are not necessarily involved group or pair work. They can be carried out in TTT if the teacher talk can elicit the interaction between the teacher and students, or among students for exchanging information or ideas. Thus sub-frameworks are needed to assess teacher talk and group/pair work respectively, which will be illustrated in the following sections.

Observing learner participation in teacher talk

Teachers are often criticised for excessive teacher talking time (TTT), and are advised to reduce TTT and increase student talking time (STT). However, the focus of the discussion has been recently drawn to the quality, rather than the quantity, of TTT. Higher quality of teacher talk can maximise learners' involvement, and result in more active participation (Walsh, 2002). As Johnson (1995) points out, in the classroom as a unique communication context, the talks between the teacher and students greatly influences what is learnt.

TTT has its irreplaceable functions and should be retained for the following reasons. Firstly, good quality TTT could result in more active participation in communication than pair or group work, based on SCT; this can be examined by

the number of students' turns and their complexity in lexical choice and grammatical structures (Walsh, 2002). Sullivan (2000) provided an example of a teacher in a Vietnamese university who used teacher talk to inspire learners' contribution because pair and group work were discouraged by the size of the classroom.

Secondly, teachers' language use plays a vital role in classroom discourse. It is a common view that relationship between teacher language and learning opportunity is worthy of note (e.g. Johnson, 1995; Walsh, 2002). Walsh (2002) analysed the features of teachers' language use in teacher-fronted activities. His study provides evidence that the language use by teachers of EFL can either facilitate learner contributions, or hinder their students' learning opportunities.

Thirdly, teacher talk is unavoidable when teachers need to give form-focused instruction or highlight the target form; provide feedback or error correction, and introduce the topic of the lesson or explain the upcoming communicative activities (pre-task). Moreover, according to relevant studies in this research context, the traditional teaching methods, such as grammar-focused, teacher-front instruction, are dominant; it is not realistic to ask teachers to abandon TTT.

Taking the view that classroom discourse is constructed by all the participants in a classroom (Johnson, 1995), this study employs an inductive approach to observe what the teachers do in TTT for facilitating learners' participation in interaction. That is, any interpretation was generated bottom-up from the data. However, it is still necessary to discuss here, in general, what the literature has to say about the features in TTT which can increase learners' participation in interaction, and thus create more opportunities for learning. Four themes are

discussed below, namely, being supportive, topic selection, teacher questioning and talk management. Nonetheless, these are not treated as imposed categories defined a priori onto the data being studied.

The first theme relates to teachers' support. Past research which applied Conversation Analysis has identified features that contribute to promoting learners' participation in interaction in teacher talking time (e.g. Walsh, 2002). First of all, a safe, supportive atmosphere should be established to encourage students to share their opinions and express themselves. As Savignon (1990) suggests, a general classroom atmosphere should be conducive to learner participation, as one feature of CLT. This could mean acceptance of all students' contributions, not judged as right or wrong answers (Johnson, 1995; Joyce & Weil, 1996). I suggest that they should also educate their students not to judge others' performance. This is especially important for Chinese speakers who have the reputation of 'saving face', and avoid 'losing face' (Huang & van Naerssen, 1987). Tsui (1996) concludes from participant teachers that the fear of making mistakes and being laughed at by classmates was one of the reasons contributing to the lack of students' participation.

The second theme involves topic selection. Lantolf (2000b) and Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2003) both suggest that the best way to maximise learning opportunity is through learner involvement in meaningful communication. To encourage this, topics or contents interesting to students or related to their own experience should be chosen. Kumaravadivelu (2003: 45) continues that '[m]ost often teachers' prepared agenda focus almost exclusively on what is taught'. However, he believes that what is taught is actually different from what is available to learn. This view is shared with Allwright (1981: 7), who comments that what is available

to learn is 'a result of interactive nature of classroom events'. This implies that teachers should allow students to ask questions and explain in the target language, even though this may not seem relevant to the teacher's agenda. Students' questions may reflect the current stage of their developing interlanguage, and what they notice is usually available to learn, and it may be also noticed by their peers. If this is the case, for the Taiwanese school context, where teachers must follow the textbooks closely, the practical way is to leave some time for unexpected detour emerging, such as learners asking questions.

In this sense, topics or contents should not be limited to a teacher's agenda, teaching materials, or syllabus, but could be suggested by learners; having a greater interest may result in greater involvement. Within the existing constraints of teaching materials or syllabus, personalised questions related to learners' own experience should be used, and considered as 'strategies' to encourage less motivated and low proficiency learners (Lindstromberg, 2004).

Thirdly, for encouraging more negotiated interaction, one effective means is more teacher questioning. To increase interaction, teachers can ask the right types of questions (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) and avoid overuse of display questions, which refer to questions for eliciting a closed set of predetermined answer, as opposed to referential questions, aiming for an open-ended set of unpredictable answers. Kumaravadivelu (2003) suggests that teachers should ensure there is a balance between asking display questions and referential questions. However, 79 percent of questions asked are display questions (Long & Sato, 1983), rarely referential questions were asked (Farahian & Rezaee, 2012), which does not reflect the greater use of referential questions in real life conversation (Thornbury, 1996).

The final theme concerns management of talk. The goal of encouraging learner participation in teacher talk can be achieved through the teacher's management of classroom talk. Kumaravadivelu (2003) points out that talk management can facilitate the flow of interaction by providing learners linguistic and also paralinguistic cues. This provision helps low proficiency learners in particular when they struggle with their still-developing interlanguage, and the process increases potential in learning. This can be viewed as scaffolding, and teachers can utilise prompting, alternative phrasing or quickly model the language needed (latched modeling), for example (Walsh, 2002).

The teachers' questions and comments should encourage students' expression of ideas and feelings, as Joyce and Weil (1996) recommend. To illustrate mainly on interactions between the teacher and individual students, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) created a three-part exchange structure: Teacher Initiation, Learner Response, and Teacher Feedback or Evaluation (IRF/E). The IRF/E model has developed as a tool for systematic study of classroom discourse (Cullen, 2002).

The traditionally practised IRF structure, with teachers' providing the initiation for most of the time, is criticised for failing to give students opportunities to ask questions, nominate topics of interest to them, and negotiate meaning (Garton, 2012). This is often associated with heavily teacher-centred instruction (Cullen, 2002), and controlled by teachers (Johnson, 1995). However, teachers can make better use of the feedback move as a powerful device for transmitting and constructing knowledge.

According to Cullen (2002), there are two roles of feedback (F-move): the evaluative and the discursal. The evaluative role is to provide feedback to

individual students about their performance. The focus here is on form, and this allows learners to confirm, disconfirm and modify their interlanguage rules. The evaluative follow-ups typically co-occur with display questions while discoursal follow-ups typically result from referential questions. The purpose of the discoursal role is to build up learners' contribution and incorporate it into the flow of classroom discourse. The emphasis is on content rather than form, for the purpose of sustaining and developing further dialogues with the class. Listening to learners' voices in class and building on what they say is one way to maximise learning opportunity, as Kumaravadivelu (2003) recommends, even if it seems unrelated to the topic. He also makes the suggestion that teachers should create possible learning opportunities for their learners, for example, when students ask questions or contribute.

Employing referential questions and feedback on content echo the features which promote learner interaction pointed out by Thornbury (1996), as does another feature, wait time. This refers to the time which is left for students to answer a question before the teacher selects another student to answer, answers it him/herself, or rephrases the question (Thornbury, 1996). Extended teacher wait time is suggested because it may result in an increase in learners' turns (Thornbury, 1996). The replacing of wait time with the teacher filling the gap hinders learning potentials for learners, which may lose them the opportunity to negotiate for meaning, use clarification, or confirmation checks (Walsh, 2002). Nunan (1991) reports the effects of extended wait time; when teachers were trained to wait three or four seconds, it not only increased the number of learner responses with more complex responses, but also resulted in an increase of the student-initiated questioning.

Four ways to facilitate learners' participation in teacher talking time have been suggested in this section. However, this study holds a similar view with Thornbury (1996: 282) that there is no implication for 'no place in the classroom for display questions, rapid-fire IRF sequences, teacher-initiated talk, and other examples of traditional classroom discourse'. However, teachers should be aware of what Maingay (1988 in Thornbury, 1996) calls 'ritualized behaviours', not becoming habits.

Earlier discussion relates to comment on content rather than on form in order to promote genuine communication. The focus now is the response to errors on form, which is often referred to as negative feedback. How teachers correct learners' error is particularly important when taking a strong version of communicative approaches. As Long (2000) comments, providing negative feedback is an example of a methodological principle in TBLT (and most other approaches and "methods" in language teaching). This approach respects the learners' internal syllabus; when learners have communication problems, their attention is drawn to forms with meanings or functions which, generally, are already at least partially understood by them. This is the time for form-focused instruction, and the opportunity for learning happens (Long, 2000).

Tanner and Green's (1998) taxonomy is helpful to understand the nature of mistakes, which are divided into three categories: slips, errors and attempts. Slips are mistakes which students can correct themselves, once the mistake has been pointed out to them. Errors, on the other hand, are mistakes which they cannot correct themselves, and therefore, need explanation. Attempts happen when students try to use the form which they do not yet know how to use. In other word, 'errors' is the area which needs the teacher's and students'

deliberate attention. This taxonomy leads the consideration of the ways to deal with different types of mistakes.

Lyster and Mori (2006) provide three techniques to deal with negative feedback: explicit correction, recasts, and prompts. Explicit correction means that the teacher supplies the correct form and clearly indicates that what the student said was incorrect. With recast techniques, the teacher implicitly reformulates all or part of the student's utterance. With prompt techniques, the teacher uses hints, clarification requests or repetition to suggest learners implicitly reformulating. I believe that these techniques should be employed alongside sensitivity to the best means of dealing with slips, errors and attempts. Decisions between these choices of techniques should be based on the teacher's understanding of the student who answers the questions; the teacher may have a clearer idea as to whether he/she is likely making a slip, error or attempt.

Observing pair and group activities

This section explains how a framework was developed to evaluate pair/group work and tasks. This framework takes into account the dimensions of both the design/plan and the process of the activities. The first criterion of communicative approaches requires engaging learners primarily in a meaning-focused activity. Littlewood's framework can be referred to here, to evaluate the communicativeness of the design.

For activities including tasks, the extent of interaction and involvement can be evaluated by the design of the activity itself as the first step. This can be done by considering whether the activity needs learners to interact with peers. Individual

work does not involve interaction, and thus is excluded from communicative approaches. Only pair or group work has the potential to create opportunities to interact.

However, one can envisage that an activity which meets all the criteria of communicative approaches in design cannot be achieved since classroom discourse is co-constructed by the teacher and students. The way in which students actually operate the activity does not always conform to the teacher's expectation; the teachers may need to take some strategies for learners' engagement in the activity. Therefore, how the teachers use strategies to increase engagement in interaction will be observed.

Combined with the framework for observing interaction and involvement, the observation scheme is illustrated in more detail in the following diagram:

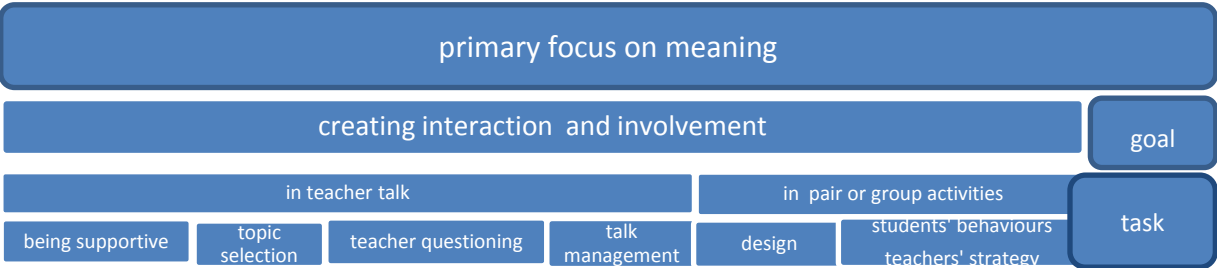


Figure 3.8 Observation Framework

Regarding the third criterion, the constitution of a task is more rigid. A task must satisfy the first two criteria, and should have a communicative goal for learners to achieve, as the name, task, suggests, For example, 'You and your partner want to go and see a movie with your friends. Ask questions and decide the best time

to go' (Nunan, 2004). Very importantly, the goal must be achieved cooperatively with peers in order to promote the interaction among students.

3.3 Factors impeding the implementation of communicative approaches

The last section introduced the key elements of communicative approaches, the theoretical bases which underlie them and the studies which support them. These theories and studies provide sufficient grounds for practising the approaches. However, they are often considered inappropriate in EFL contexts (Walsh & Wyatt, 2014) and this section explores the reasons for this. Drawing on a great deal of research, this may be attributed to lack of understanding and misconceptions by teachers (3.3.1), teachers' beliefs (3.3.2) and teacher knowledge (3.3.3), contextual factors (3.3.4) and other factors (3.3.5). The purpose of reviewing the relevant literature is to take these factors into consideration in order to promote the success of this action research programme.

3.3.1 Lack of understanding

Teachers' lack of understanding of communicative approaches is a common finding among studies. According to Mangubhai *et al.*, (2007), citing work from 1988 to 2002, many teachers still have limited understanding of CLT and its implementation. Nunan (2003: 599) also concludes that most teachers in seven countries in the Asian-Pacific Region (including Taiwan) had a poor understanding of CLT, and regards this as 'a major problem throughout the region'. Similarly, Deng and Carless (2009) point out that teacher understanding

is one of the biggest challenges in the implementation of TBLT in China.

The lack of understanding may easily lead to misconceptions. Drawing from a number of past studies, Littlewood (2007) concludes that two of the most common misconceptions worldwide about CLT are that it might mean no grammar teaching, but merely teaching speaking. This may be true for the initial stage of CLT, which aims for a closely naturalistic SLA environment and now is referred to as the 'strong form' of CLT (Dörnyei, 2009).

More than 30 years ago, according to Canale and Swain (1980), scholars suggested the incorporation of grammar teaching into the context of meaningful communication. As noted above, relying on pure implicit learning has turned out to be less than successful in SLA in general. This stance is referred to as the 'weak form' of CLT. Many TESOL experts (e.g. Ellis, 2002; Nunan, 2004; Spada & Lightbown, 2008) support the weak form of CLT, claiming form-focused instruction should be integrated into meaningful communicative activities.

Similar to CLT, TBLT emphasises the process of interaction and negotiation of meaning, and also designs tasks using media to carry out the process in order to facilitate language acquisition (Nunan, 1991; Breen, 2001). TBLT also has a number of variations ranging from strong to weak versions. For a strong version, learners choose their preferred language forms to complete the requirement of a task. For a weak form, or task-supported teaching, analogous to the presentation-practice-production (PPP) sequence, tasks provide opportunities to practise language items at the final step of the PPP sequence, i.e. after they have been introduced and learners have done controlled practice (Ellis, 2003). The input of tasks can be written or spoken forms, and the output can be assigned to produce speaking or writing. Therefore, tasks have the potential to

integrate the four skills.

Bearing the variations of CLT and TBLT in mind, teachers can choose from whatever matches well with their own beliefs and teaching context. Either using a weak version or strong form of CLT or TBLT, the claimed ultimate aim is to develop communicative competence (Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Richards, 2005). Nonetheless, the weak form of CLT has more potential for achieving this aim, based on the belief that form is best learnt when the focus is on meaning (3.1.1). As Kumaravadivelu (2006a) describes, CLT enables language learners to become grammatically accurate and communicatively fluent. The strong version of TBLT is more likely to achieve the aim of communicative competence because if learners' attention is primed to focus on a particular form, there would not be real communication (Willis & Willis, 2007).

Another factor is that L2 teachers may lack materials or resources for them to understand CLT or TBLT. Mangubhai *et al.* (2007) analysed 34 texts in which the authors define CLT or describe how it can be applied to classroom practice. They found that a feature of these written materials was that there were considerable variations in the focus of the articles with 22 constructs identified from these texts. Their findings highlight the challenge confronting teachers who wish to understand CLT and its use in classrooms. TBLT is not better understood by teachers than CLT. As Carless (2009) observes, the divergent variations and alternatives in TBLT may be one of the reasons why it is not always well-understood by teachers, evidenced from Hong Kong and elsewhere.

Another fallacy is to regard TBLT and CLT as a prescriptive method with fixed principles. As Kumaravadivelu (2003) stresses, all methods have their limitations and it is often too easy to assume that one method can be operated around the

world. He regards CLT and TBLT as a method and criticises them for this reason. However, the breadth or scope of CLT is generally acknowledged to be more of an approach rather than a method (Mangubhai *et al.*, 2007). Richards and Rodgers (2001: 172) point out that CLT in essence 'refers to a diverse set of principles that reflect a communicative view of language and language learning and that can be used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures'. Long (2000) makes it clear that the first step for designing a task is to take learners' needs into consideration. Mangubhai *et al.* (2007: 97) added: 'CLT involves the use of a number of methods such as role play, group work and paired activities, and thus is much broader in scope than a single method'. Additionally, learning from Long's (2000) interpretation of TBLT, it can be seen that it is a very learner centred, context-specific approach.

Another situation is that teachers lack the knowledge to apply the principles of communicative approaches to their practice. Several studies have observed that some teachers expressed their commitment to the approaches, but appear to reinterpret it without the features of CLT or TBLT (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b; Littlewood, 2007; Wyatt, 2009). For example, Wyatt (2009) reported on how a teacher's knowledge of CLT grew. At the beginning, the teacher was eager to use CLT and filled with confidence; however, no evidence of meaningful interaction was observed in her classes. Deng and Carless (2009) also provide such an example. They suggest effective teacher development activities are needed to assist teachers to understand theory and practice in TBLT. It is indeed necessary, given the complexity of theories of CLT and TBLT and their application to practice.

3.3.2 Teachers' beliefs

While past research has regarded EFL teachers' lack of understandings of communicative approaches as a barrier, teachers' beliefs seem to be premised as powerful impacts on implementation of an innovation. Li and Walsh (2011) investigated the impact of teachers' beliefs on implementation of Information and Communications Technology (ICT); Carless (2004; 2009) on innovation of TBLT; Jarvis and Atsilarat (2004) on communicative approaches; Savignon and Wang (2003) on CLT. In these cases, the findings consistently support the claim which Borg (2005) makes that teachers' beliefs have a powerful influence on their practice. In Borg's (2001) words, belief is:

a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further it serves as a guide to thought and behaviour (p.186).

In this definition, some common features of beliefs can be identified. Firstly, a belief is a mental state, which guides people's thought and action (Donaghue, 2003). Secondly, it is conscious or/and unconscious, and thirdly, it is viewed as value commitments, which suggests that a belief is personal and affective. Teachers' beliefs usually refer to teachers' pedagogic beliefs about learning, teaching, subject matter or the role of a teacher (Borg, 2001). Analysing much research, Borg (2006) added the features of practical, tacit, systematic and dynamic to the construct of teachers' beliefs.

With these features, teachers' beliefs can greatly influence their decision to accept a new approach or technique (Borg, 2005). As Ellis (1996) states, for teachers to learn a new approach, they must add new information into old sets of beliefs and knowledge. The new information may conflict with teachers'

pre-existing beliefs if the philosophy of the new idea is incompatible with them (Freeman and Richards, 1993). Thus, teachers would either ignore or tend to reinterpret innovative ideas to conform to their own style of teaching (Karavas-Doukas, 1996).

Teachers' beliefs tend to be formed early from their experiences as learners and teachers in a complex, non-linear mode (James, 2001), and are also culturally bound, which makes them resistant to change (Williams & Burden, 1997). Peacock's (2001 in Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005) study investigated whether beliefs about language learning would change after a three-year pre-service teacher programme at a university of Hong Kong. 146 trainee teachers were investigated as they studied TESL methodology. Using the "Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory" (BALLI, a Likert-scale questionnaire developed by Horwitz, 1985), Peacock concludes that no significant changes in beliefs were found.

The influence of beliefs is profound. As Williams and Burden (1997) point out, teachers' deep-rooted beliefs about how languages are learned are far more powerful in penetrating their classroom behaviours than a particular methodology they are told to adopt or textbooks to follow. Williams and Burden (1997) provide examples of how teachers' beliefs about learners could affect their classroom practices. If the teacher views learners as 'resisters' who do not want to learn, it becomes a natural way for the teacher to rely on compulsion or punishment for overcoming such resistance, and they may be least likely to seek value in what the learners are doing. A more common metaphor, perhaps, is one which regards learners as 'receptacles' to be filled with knowledge. Holding this view, the teacher may employ methods involving transmission of language items

such as giving lectures to these learners, and is unlikely to leave the learners to explore language items independently. Teachers who take the assumption of learners as 'individual explorer' may perceive their role as a facilitator who provides minimum prompts; this allows learners to explore for themselves and come to their own conclusions. Taking this a step further, teachers would believe that learners have abilities to set up their own agenda and decide what and how to learn, regarded as 'democratic exploration'. Mangubhai *et al.* (2007) identify six different teachers' roles: facilitator of communication processes, guide rather than transmitter of knowledge, organizer of resources, analyst of student needs, counselor/corrector, and group process manager. Teachers who believe in communicative approaches would perceive themselves more similar to a facilitator than a knowledge transmitter. Being a facilitator means to help students by discussing problems, giving advice, and providing a safe environment for students to ask questions (Gee, 1999).

Despite the influence of teachers' beliefs, they did not receive much attention or be identified as a crucial element in teacher education until the 1990s (Donaghue, 2003; Borg, 2005) and only recently have they been studied in relation to CLT (Mangubhai *et al.*, 2007).

3.3.3 Teacher knowledge

In addition to beliefs, there have been increasing appeals to include the knowledge base of teachers in teacher education, e.g. by Shulman (1987) and Freeman (2002). Despite different views or definitions of teacher knowledge, teachers' beliefs tend to feature. Following Alexander, Schallert and Hare (1991), Verloop, Van Driel and Meijer (2001) regard teacher knowledge as the

superordinate term for all kinds of cognition, including 'all that a person knows or believes to be true, whether or not it is verified as true in some sort of objective or external way' (Alexander *et al.*, 1991: 317). They view beliefs, components of knowledge, conceptions and intuitions as being inextricably intertwined in the teacher's mind. They also agree with Pajares' (1992) view that although both knowledge and beliefs are unreflected intuitions, knowledge is more related to factual propositions. Rather than attempting to separate them in a clear cut way, this study holds the view that it is more important to explore the impact of how teachers think, view and gain knowledge of teaching, and reflect that knowledge on their practice.

Teaching is a highly complex activity; it needs to draw on many types of knowledge (Shulman, 1987; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Scholars have made attempts to categorise or identify a knowledge base for teaching. Arguing that teachers' role is as an active thinker in developing a body of knowledge, as well as considering their unique expertise, Elbaz (1981) proposes a view of the teacher as holding and using 'practical knowledge' (PK). Shulman (1986, 1987) proposes a classification of the knowledge base of teachers into seven categories: subject-matter content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, curricular knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends. Among these, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) has been viewed as an influential contribution to the domain of teacher knowledge (Borg, 2006).

PK and PCK have extended their influence to nowadays (Borg, 2006). The rest of this section will discuss these two types of teacher knowledge due to their

personal and experiential nature which lead to the ultimate success of teaching; as Van Manen (1995) comments, such knowledge is inherent in practical actions.

3.3.3.1 Received knowledge vs. practitioner knowledge

The knowledge base of a teacher or teaching is often presented as a dichotomy. Using Schön's (1983) idea of 'knowing-in-action' and 'reflection', Wallace (1991) distinguishes *received knowledge* from *experiential knowledge*. Received knowledge consists of facts, data, theories, and is often related to research, while experiential knowledge is acquired through practice. Similarly, some refer to 'the collective theoretical knowledge of the profession' to 'Theory' with a capital T, as opposed to knowledge derived from teachers' practice as 'theory' with a small t (Malderez and Bodocsky, 1999: 13). Malderez and Wedell (2007) stated that most teachers they know learn how to teach from experience as learners and teachers. Knowledge derived from teachers' practice is also termed in a variety of ways. For example, Kumaravadivelu (2003) defines it as professional theory or personal theory, which is individual and unique to each person.

With increasing realisation of the frequent gap between received knowledge (Theory) and practice, and the failed uptake by teachers, attention has been shifting to discuss the nature of knowledge derived from teachers' practice. Schön (1983) argues that professional practice depends on tacit knowing-in-action, rather than received knowledge. Schön (1983) acknowledges the properties of such "knowing": (1) it is carried out spontaneously without

thinking about it prior to or during the performance; (2) it is performed without awareness; (3) it is internalised, and usually impossible to describe. He refers to 'knowing-in-action', as 'the characteristic mode of ordinary practical knowledge' (p.54). Applying it to the teaching profession, Wallace (1991) contends that when immediate and complex interactions in classrooms happen, practitioners make spontaneous or instantaneous decisions; this is clearly not a case of conscious application of received knowledge. Such kind of knowing is clearly the case of 'knowledge how' or implicit knowledge, as opposed to 'knowledge about' or explicit knowledge, referring to received knowledge. Implicit knowledge is under different names in the literature, including 'principles', 'personal theories', 'maxims', 'practitioner knowledge' (Richards, 2008). This type of knowledge refers to the beliefs, personal theory and knowledge which is derived from teachers' practice, and in turn guides teachers' practice. PK and PCK are central to implicit knowledge (Richards, 2008). This study uses the term, 'practitioner knowledge' to refer to 'knowledge how', implicit knowledge, or experiential knowledge.

Going one step further, Wallace (1991) provides an explanation of how received knowledge and experiential knowledge interact. He argues that received knowledge can be acquired through experimenting in practice, via reflection, and become experiential knowledge. This is a fundamental principle of the reflective models, including those of Kolb (1984) and Ur (1996). These models can contribute to bridging the gap between theory and practice. Reflecting on these unconscious feelings and intentions can lead to conscious development of insights into knowing in action for improvement in practice (Wallace, 1991). This underlies one of my reasons for including reflection in the TD programme. PK and PCK are such experiential knowledge, and will be discussed in the following

sections.

3.3.3.2 Practical knowledge (PK)

Practical knowledge (PK) originates in and evolves continuously from individual teacher's practice, and in turn, informs practice (Elbaz, 1981; James, 2001; Borg, 2005). The domain of PK usually includes personal knowledge, beliefs and implicit theories (Carter, 1990; Borg, 2006).

Elbaz's (1981) concept of PK encompasses three aspects. One is a practical or experiential aspect which refers to the knowledge derived from practice. The examples of PK include: knowledge of 'instructional routines, classroom management, student needs, and the like' (p.47). Another is a personal aspect; teachers have self-knowledge which guides their sense-making processes in their teaching. The third is an interaction aspect, that is, 'teachers' knowledge is based on, and shaped by, a variety of interactions with others', e.g. students, administrators, others in the social context, and theories from research. These three aspects suggest that PK is not only generated by a teacher per se, but is also the product generated under the interaction with the milieu in school and social contexts. This suggests a TD programme which aims to assist teachers in developing some knowledge should be conducted within their contexts.

In terms of the content of PK, Elbaz (1981) defines five categories: knowledge of subject matter, instruction, self, curriculum and the milieu of schooling. Borg (2005) combines the last two categories to knowledge of context, and stresses that the four categories of PK overlap and interact with each other.

Elbaz (1981) draws her conclusions from the description of the knowledge

through a narrative story of an experienced teacher. According to Fenstermacher (1994), many researchers (e.g. Russell and Munby, 1992; Erickson & MacKinnon, 1991) show a greater interest in Schön's conception of reflective practice than in Elbaz's. Thus there has been increasing use of videotape to record teachers' practice, and apply reflective practice to improve the initial preparation of teachers.

The personal and value-involved nature of PK means that it does not necessarily lead to the "right" practice; PK needs to be informed by theory or received knowledge, and infused with resources from outside (e.g. peers, other educators), as Ur (1996), and Haggarty and Postlethwaite (2003) urge. Borg (2006) and Wyatt (2009) also believe that PK can be influenced by formal knowledge or theories. Connecting that view to this study, if the policy of implementing communicative approaches can be carried out, teachers should be informed by the theories behind the approaches, and understand them as the first step. Deng and Carless (2009) suggest effective teacher development activities are needed to provide teachers with the perceived knowledge of them as input, which should be comprehensive. As mentioned in the last section, the various versions of CLT and TBLT among authors often make the concepts ambiguous to teachers and make them difficult to apply to practice.

3.3.3.3 Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)

PCK is specific subject matter, distinguished from the general pedagogical knowledge shared by all disciplines. In Shulman's (1987) words, PCK, is 'that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding' (p.8). According

to this definition, PCK is also personal, and value-laden. Shulman (1987) suggests that this knowledge most likely distinguishes someone who can *teach* some subject well from someone who *knows* the subject well. As Borg (2006) rightly points out, knowing a subject is not sufficient for teaching that subject skilfully. This suggests that understanding a teacher's competence in teaching can be done through examining the components of PCK in this teacher's practice.

PCK suggests that content and pedagogy are inherently interrelated; therefore, they should not be treated in isolation from each other. Shulman (1987) suggests that the relationship, i.e. the intersection of the two, should be explored through pedagogical content knowledge. The relationship between the two can be partly explained by Marks' (1990) description of PCK: '[PCK] represents a class of knowledge that is central to teachers' work and that would not typically be held by non-teaching subject matter experts or by teachers who know little of that subject' (in Mishra & Koehler, 2006: 1029).

The components of Shulman's concept of PCK which are encompassed can be identified from the text when Shulman (1987) explains further that pedagogical content knowledge:

... represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction (p. 8).

Four components are identified: subject matter or content knowledge, curricular knowledge, knowledge about students' understanding of the subject, and knowledge of pedagogical strategies. Subject matter or content knowledge is defined by Rowan *et al.* (2001: 5) as 'knowledge of the central concepts,

principles, and relationships in a curricular domain, as well knowledge of alternative ways these can be represented in instructional situations'. This definition reflects Shulman's (1994) elucidation of PCK, which is involved with how a teacher chooses from a variety of tools such as analogies, illustrations to represent the subject in a comprehensible manner to the learners. Curricular knowledge involves knowledge and beliefs about how the contents should be selected and organised in the best way for instruction (Grossman, 1989). The third component, knowledge about students' understanding of the subject, refers to the conceptions and preconceptions which different students in ages and backgrounds, for example, bring with them to the learning (Shulman, 1994). In planning for a lesson, teachers need an understanding of what makes the learning of particular subject matter easy or difficult for the learners (Shulman, 1994), and of what they already know (Grossman, 1989). It also involves strategic knowledge when the learners' preconceptions are likely misconceptions (which is often the case) (Shulman, 1994). Teachers need such knowledge to incorporate appropriate conceptual representations in order to reorganise the understanding of learners. The variations of tasks can be resources for teachers to access and choose from the most suitable option for a particular teaching situation (Littlewood, 2004).

Shulman (1986; 1994) urges the inclusion of PCK in teacher education programmes. Drawing on Shulman's concept as a framework, Grossman (1989) conducted contrasting case study research to investigate how a subject-specific teacher preparation coursework can influence beginning teacher's development of PCK in the teaching of English, as L1. She concludes that such coursework did influence those teachers' PCK of English in terms of their conceptions of the purpose for teaching it, the ideas about what to teach (curricular knowledge),

and their knowledge of student understanding. Rowan *et al.* (2001) also set up a framework to operationalise Shulman's (1986, 1987) concept of PCK; they identify three components to be measured with a bank of survey items developed: content knowledge, knowledge of students' thinking, and knowledge of pedagogical strategies (so curricular knowledge was missing). The results of a pilot study show few survey items were reliable statistically due to the small scale nature. Although the concept of PCK is still popular in the discussion about teacher education, it needs a closer look into its nature and its implications for/in teaching (Segall, 2004).

Another research gap is that studies in researching PCK have been mainly in the subjects of Mathematics and Science. Few studied English as an L1 subject (e.g. two examples above), or in the domain of second language teacher education. The four components of PCK can serve as a framework of indicators both for teacher educators to provide the input and for the teachers to understand how their PCK grows.

Despite this, it is widely accepted that teachers' beliefs have a profound influence on their practice; their practitioner knowledge is derived from– and interacts with– their teaching contexts. However, it is possible that the extent to which teachers can behave in accordance to their beliefs often depends upon contextual factors beyond their control (Borg, 2006). As Borg (2006: 284) notes, 'Contextual factors play an important role in mediating the extent to which teachers are able to implement instruction congruent with their cognition'. The next section will discuss whether contextual factors discourage the implementation of communication approaches, or whether other factors are more dominant.

3.3.4. Contextual factors

Drawing on past studies on the practical implementation of the communication approaches, context has been identified as another key factor which may interact or conflict with these approaches (e.g. Butler, 2011). Contextual factors include organisational, political and cultural contexts, in which the change is being attempted. This section discusses the commonly cited contextual factors in the relevant literature.

3.3.4.1 Possible challenges of traditional cultural beliefs

At the early stage of CLT, its intention to focus on native-speaker cultural norms and the subsequent difficulty in the realisation of this approach made the appropriateness of employing CLT in other countries questionable. According to Mangubhai *et al.* (2007), the studies on adoption of CLT in China, Korea and Vietnam, indicate a lack of enthusiasm for it due to its challenging of traditional cultural beliefs and values. Hu's (2002) study in the Chinese context also supports this view. Rao (1996) presents analyses of how Chinese traditional teaching has influenced negatively the implementation of CLT in China. Rao points out that the deep-rooted Confucian philosophy influences the views on teachers' roles as authority of knowledge and obligation to explain and transmit knowledge. Teachers are usually the centre of class, conducting their main roles: analysing sentence structures, engaging students in appreciating literature and mastering grammatical points, which contrasts with communicative approaches that values learner autonomy and views learners as the centre of class.

Even so, this contextual factor could be reconciled in EFL contexts. Rao (1996)

suggests some methods that teachers can adopt to reconcile Chinese traditional and the western pedagogy. For example, when organising discussion activities and also teaching grammar; importantly, learners should be provided with appropriate circumstances to practise using the rules in real life. This is not unlike communicative approaches. Sullivan (2000) also provides an example of the integration of CLT and local culture. She observed a Vietnamese university classroom where pair and group work was discouraged by the size of the classroom; however, the English teacher applied their ancient tradition of oral verse (play with words) and generated a great deal of interaction in a teacher-at-the-front manner.

3.3.4.2 Time available in school

In respect to the social context of the school and classrooms, the issue of time available for communicative activities in class and time for preparation is often pointed out in past studies which designed to understand the implementation of communicative approaches. Teachers often face very tight schedule to finish the school syllabus; as found in, for example, Farrel and Lim's (2005) study in a primary school in Singapore or Carless' (2003) study in Chinese primary school contexts. Carless (2003) observed that the pressure of time often squeezed out the use of tasks and the teachers used more time in preparation for their students' writing skills.

Related to this, teachers' heavy workload may discourage them from time consuming preparation for communicative activities (Crookers & Arakaki, 1999). The business of a Taiwanese junior-high-school teacher is closely congruent with Van Manen's (1995: 5) description of a typical school teachers' life (2.2.1).

They deal with routines and unexpected pastoral issues on the daily bases.

3.3.4.3 School and national examinations

In some contexts, national examinations have fundamental influence on teachers' practice. As Larsen-Freeman (2003: 5) points out, '[h]aving to prepare one's students to pass a particular standardized exam can be a powerful influence on what one teaches'. Chinese students have to take entrance exams for going to high school and university (Deng & Carless, 2009), as do Taiwanese. The national examinations for English mainly test students' vocabulary, grammatical knowledge and reading comprehension without listening and speaking tests (Rao, 1996 in China; Liu, 2012 in Taiwan). Therefore, teachers teach for tests at the expense of communicative activities (Ur, 2013a). Aldridge *et al.* (1999) and Hsu (2015) found this is the case in Taiwan. Similarly in Japan, according to Nunan (2003), the official government rhetoric set the objective to develop practical communication skills; however, it is rarely reflected at the classroom level, where the emphasis is on reading and writing skills, for passing entrance examinations and going to senior high school and university. In Nishino's (2008) study, the teachers reported that they wanted to use more communicative activities in class. However, they believe that listening and speaking skills are less important for passing entrance examinations. Instead, they believe that grammar, vocabulary, and *yakudoku* (non-oral method focusing on translation) were more important for passing entrance examinations than for general learning. Teachers' concern over entrance examinations had a strong influence on their perceived importance of English skills and knowledge, as seen in Nishino's (2008) study. This is very similar to Taiwanese status of quo (Hsu,

2015).

While the exam patterns do not match the national guidelines in these countries mentioned above, Hong Kong has developed more task-based examinations. This reform was designed to create more incentives for teachers to subscribe to communicative approaches. However, as Carless (2007) concludes, many teachers still preferred traditional test-preparation techniques to cope with task-based examinations. TBLT is unpopular even in primary schools in China (Deng & Carless, 2009), where there is less pressure from the national exam.

This suggests that there may be another factor which is more dominant than contextual factors. In Martínez and Arce's (2008) research on the communicative curriculum of EFL in primary schools, they observed variables and categorised them into external variables (e.g. equipment to teach English, size of group) and internal variables (e.g. teachers' skills and knowledge). They considered internal variables as the core of problems because appropriate teaching strategies could be used to deal with these external variables. As Kelly (1980) concludes, three criteria have to be satisfied for teachers to be willing to adopt a new teaching idea: it must be seen as feasible in the classroom practice, to be relevant to teaching-learning needs, and to be acceptable by teachers' underlying belief systems. However, even if the idea is perceived as both feasible and relevant, there remains the issue of consonance with teachers' existing beliefs (Borg, 2005).

Preparation for national examinations and heavy workload leave limited time for teachers to understand and prepare teaching plans for communicative approaches. To deal with the issues regarding preparation time, textbooks and materials can be designed for communicative activities, as those in Hong Kong

(Carless, 2009). This should include detailed procedures for teachers to adopt or adapt, and thus reduce teachers' time for preparation and promote teachers' motivation for their implementing.

3.3.4.4 Textbooks

Textbooks often play a significant role in second or foreign language classrooms (Richards, 1998). In the contexts where the teachers need to follow the textbooks which are not communicative-based, the implementation of communicative approaches would depend on time available. Carless' (2003) observation found that Hong Kong teachers, when facing very tight schedule, felt the obligation to complete the textbook as a priority.

One solution may be adding communicative elements in textbooks and a detailed teacher manual to deal with teachers' lack of time in preparation. Commercial textbooks are often compiled with carefully developed syllabus, coherent in structure, and often developed by experts who bring new theories and approaches. If teachers follow such textbooks, then they are involved in scientifically based teaching (Richards, 1998). However, as Brumfit (1979 cited in McGrath, 2002: 10) suggests, coursebook materials should be provided as 'resource packs, sets of materials with advice to teachers on how to adapt and modify the contents'. This allows flexibility for local needs and learners' different attributes. Carless (2003) observed that the task-based textbooks used in the research primary schools provide suggestions for tasks and some relevant materials. Some teachers in his study stated that this saved time in designing activities.

3.3.4.5 Learner factors

Students should be the focus of classroom activities and their views play an important role (Brown, 2009). Here, they are put in the category of 'contextual factors' because teacher factors are in the focus of this study. Williams and Burden (1997) draw from past research and conclude that learners' perceptions and interpretations have significant influence on their achievement. Thus, it is important for teachers to understand learners' expectations and seek reconciliation (Brown, 2009). However, more studies have investigated teachers' beliefs than students' beliefs or expectations of second/foreign language teaching (Brown 2009). Among these limited number of studies, most of them focused on university students, e.g. Brown (2009), Tok (2010), Ngoc and Iwashita (2012) and Hsu (2015). Secondary school students' views were scarcely investigated. This current study explored junior high school students' attitudes and perceptions, which may address this research gap.

Mismatches between teachers' and learners' expectations of L2 teaching and learning likely exist. The studies of Brown (2009) and Tok (2010) find that the university teachers demonstrated more enthusiasm about communicative approaches than their learners. Brown (2009) speculates that the students' preference for grammar instruction may be affected by the assessment which prioritizes grammar skills. Fushino (2010) points out that learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) matters; teachers cannot force students to participate in groups in the way teachers want or expect them to. Past studies often pointed out that learners' attitudes discouraged their teachers' implementation of CLT or TBLT (Walsh & Wyatt, 2014).

Chinese (Xie, 2009) or Asian learners of English (Hsu, 2015) are often portrayed

as reticent and quiet in class. Much research both by local and western researchers has investigated the possible causes of the reasons for Chinese learners' reluctant participation in English classrooms. The common reasons include: saving 'face' for the fear of making mistakes (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996), being influenced by Confucian values of modesty (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Rao, 1996), looking up to teachers as authority, and thus not interrupting them with questions, or being taken as challenging them (Cortazzi & Jin 1996; Tan, 2008). Among these, the fear of making mistakes was also pointed out by the teachers in Tusi (1996). These studies seem to suggest that cultures also have impacts on learners' attitudes.

Whilst the studies above suggest Chinese learners' reluctance in participation, Savignon and Wang (2003) find this is not the case. They asked university students in Taiwan to reflect on how English was taught when they were in junior high (aged 13-15) and in senior high school (aged 16-18), and their attitudes and perceptions of instruction in both stages. The questionnaire showed the students' positive attitudes towards meaning-based instruction and negative attitudes towards form-focused instruction. Their study asked the students to respond to hypothetical questions rather than to their real experiences. This current study includes eliciting their views while they are experiencing communicative activities.

Past studies also identified "reticence" of students' as a social construction caused by the communicative environment that the teachers create in their interactions with their students, i.e. the teachers' interactive manners. While researchers such as Cortazzi and Jin (1996) neglect the teachers' discourse style, Xie (2009) set out to look into teacher–student interactions with a

case-study methodology. She observed that the teacher sometimes deprived students' opportunities of participation in 'extended dialogue, to develop a topic, and to make explicit their thinking' (p.7). Her findings are similar to Tan's (2008) study, which also looked into the interactions in Chinese university EFL classrooms. Tan points out that some teachers' talk patterns contribute to their learners' reticence since they usually put predetermined correct answers before the students' new ideas and their experiment with the target language. Additionally, insufficient wait-times also resulted in students' brief replies or no responses (Tan, 2008). The teachers' intolerance of silence is also identified by the teachers in Tusi (1996).

Other learner factors include their low proficiency levels. The teachers in Tusi's (1996) study in Hong Kong and all 18 teachers in Li's (1998) study in S. Korea point out that their learners' low proficiency level could be a barrier to the implementation of communicative approaches. However, Carless (2003) suggested that this view might be caused by misconceptions about the approaches, and/or inappropriate selection of tasks. Indeed, tasks and communicative activities can be designed to suit different levels of learners. Tusi (1996) also lists overtly difficult teachers' language input (incomprehensible input), and unequal speaking opportunities afforded to each student by the teacher.

3.3.5 Other factors

The class size may be an issue and it is usually larger in Asian countries (Ur, 2013a). In Wyatt's (2009) case study, the teacher had 45 students in class. Wyatt observed that she eventually developed her practical knowledge in

employing pair work and group work in class. However, he did not describe how she overcame the difficulty of class size. Two suggestions are provided. One is conducting interactive teacher talk (Sullivan, 2000). The other is creating more opportunities for each student to speak is to implement pair work or group work (Rao, 1996).

Teachers' lack of communicative competence is also a commonly reported factor contributing to implementation issues (e.g. Li, 1998; Nunan, 2003). In Taiwan, junior high school English teachers only need to teach based on the standard 1200 word vocabulary; it is not a level too high for teachers to reach. Some teachers may not be confident in their English proficiency to answer spontaneous questions arising from interactions in the classroom, as Rao (1996) reported in Chinese contexts. It is not necessary to use entirely L2 to conduct the lesson (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). L1 is the most useful to help the students understand complex English sentences and abstract concepts. Also, using L2 to explain difficult language points is often time consuming and can confuse students even more (Rao, 1996).

The use of L1 can be seen as problematic when the goal is for students to talk in L2. Using the first language or code-switching from the target language to the students' native language or vice versa is common in EFL world-wide, and if it is used judiciously by teachers or pupils, it may make a positive contribution to the learning process (Carless, 2002). Students need opportunities to clarify the meaning of the teacher's words, or the task requirements and how to tackle it; additionally, students using L1 can have social functions, e.g. creating group cohesion or reducing anxiety (Carless, 2002). Therefore, preventing the students from using L1 is not beneficial, especially during the early stages of

learning. The aim is that as student progress, the use of the mother-tongue can be gradually replaced by L2 (Rao, 1996).

3.3.6 Interaction between these factors

The previous sections have discussed the implementation issues from the approach itself, teacher cognitions, learners and contextual factors. Examination of the nature of teachers' beliefs and teacher knowledge have suggested the argument that these factors are interrelated with each other and interact with teachers' classroom behaviour (Richards, 2008). To summarise, teachers' behaviours are influenced by- and in turn influence- their beliefs. Whilst these elements interact with each other, they are also interacting with the factors of socio-cultural and educational contexts. To illustrate the interaction, it is helpful to draw on Malderez and Bodocsky's (1999) metaphor of the teacher iceberg (Figure 3.9).

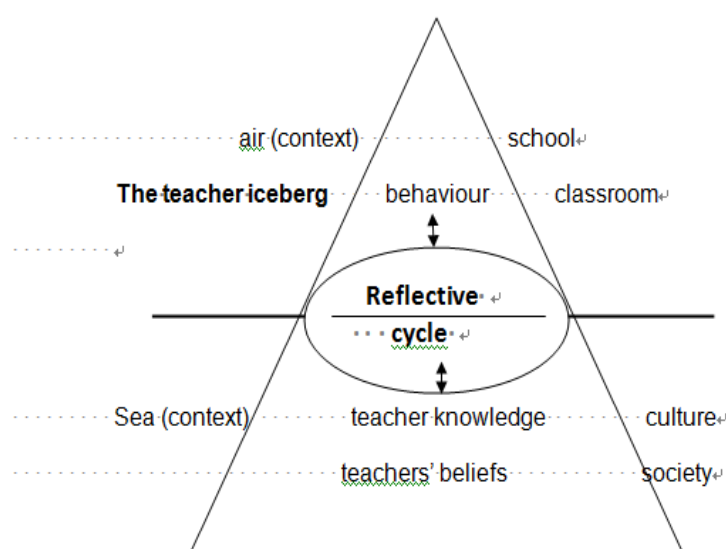


Figure 3.9 The teacher iceberg

Adapted from Martínez & Arce (2008: 15)

The surface level, as Figure 3.9 shows, consisting of a small portion of an iceberg, is compared to teachers' visible professional behaviours and subject knowledge. These are surrounded and assumed to be influenced by the "air", an analogy with the culture of educational systems e.g. school and classroom in which the teacher works. Below the surface of an iceberg lies a major part, which is unavoidably surrounded by and interacted with the 'sea', that is, socio-cultural factors. The middle is compared to a body of knowledge (e.g. about language teaching and learners) which teachers draw on to guide their action. The deepest portion is compared to attitudes, beliefs and views influenced by socio-cultural factors. On the other hand, teachers' classroom practice also appears to inform their knowledge constructs and their beliefs. All these suggest that teachers' beliefs, practice and contextual factors are mutually informed (Malderez & Bodocsky, 1999; Water, 2005).

The discussion of the interaction between teachers' beliefs, knowledge, contextual factors, and practice lead to several conclusions. Firstly, theory needs to be customised to match context (Mangubhai *et al.*, 2007). Secondly, these factors need to be addressed together to make the implementation work. Thirdly, for teachers to develop beliefs and practitioner knowledge of a new approach needs long-term involvement. How these implications inform the theoretical framework of the teacher development programme will be addressed in the following section.

3.4 The theoretical framework of the teacher development programme

The last section discussed the commonly cited factors which impact the implementation of communicative approaches. If these are also the case in this

research setting, the teacher education programme set up for this research must take these factors into consideration. The way that the nature of teacher learning is conceptualised leads to different approaches to teacher education. Combining the implications from previous discussions and the nature of teacher learning, a theoretical framework for this programme is hence established. This section starts with a discussion of the theoretical bases, followed by discussions of the concept of reflection, and sociocultural aspects to address how to support teachers to understand the approaches and how to help teachers in shaping beliefs and developing knowledge of the approaches. The final part explains the methods to be used in this programme which follow the theoretical framework and address the potential barriers.

3.4.1 Complexity theory in a long-term teacher development programme

Regarding the first two implications (3.3.6), individual factors, such as teacher cognition and contextual factors can impede the adoption of pedagogical innovations in the institutional, political and cultural context in which the change is being attempted (Richards, 2008). These factors are interwoven in a complex fashion (Borg, 2006), and this argument is supported by complexity theory (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). The factors need to be addressed together to make the implementation work; omitting any of them would detract from the implementation since these factors interact in dynamic, generative mechanisms. This theory conceptualises teacher learning as a complex system rather than as a single event.

Theories need to be customised to match contexts (Mangubhai *et al.*, 2007). Taking a complexity theory stance, Opfer and Pedder (2011) argue that the

ineffectiveness and disappointing results of professional development programmes result from detaching knowledge from the contexts. Their focus was often on merely specific activities or processes, which were isolated from the complex teaching and learning environments. They urge teacher learning should be conceptualised as a 'complex system', rather than as a single event, and should take into account the full extent of the teachers' wider as well as narrower contexts. The elements in systems and subsystems are 'interdependent and reciprocally influential', and 'relationships between elements in the system vary in scale and intensity' (p. 379). It is not realistic to attempt to take all levels into consideration for every aspect of teachers' professional learning; nevertheless, one should be aware that any attempt to understand teacher learning by taking only a subsystem level should be understood as incomplete, partial and biased.

In relation to the third implication, for teachers to develop beliefs and practitioner knowledge of a new approach takes long-term involvement. In the area of teacher education (TE), teacher training (TT) and teacher development (TD) are common terms. Efforts have been made to distinguish those terms. For example, Richards and Farrell (2005) and others view TE as an umbrella term which covers two broad types of goals: TT and TD. TT refers to activities directly focused on teachers' present responsibility, for example, learning the way to use effective methods to start a lesson, or adapt the textbook to fit their learners' needs (Richards & Farrell, 2005). On the other hand, rather than focusing on a specific job, TD activities aim 'to facilitate general growth of teachers' understanding of teaching and of themselves as teachers' (Richards & Farrell, 2005: 4). That is, TT typically concerns a short-term, immediate goal, whereas TD serves a long-term goal. In addition, while teacher training programmes

focus on teaching skills, teacher development involves ongoing process of growth.

This study adopts their definition of TD, which is compatible with the European view on TE, foregrounding professional and personal growth (Mann, 2005). Richards (2008) points out that from past research, training activities show little evidence of changes in teacher's practices. Thus the focus of teacher education has shifted to long term development of teaching as a profession. Wyatt's (2009) study provides a successful example of a three-year BA TESOL programme. It illustrates how a teacher from Oman, who had limited practical knowledge (PK) of its implementation, developed her abilities to use CLT in practice.

3.4.2 Conceptualisation of teacher learning: Towards a holistic view of teacher learning

The way in which TE is conducted depends on how teacher learning is conceptualised. Teacher learning is concerned with assumptions such as what the nature of teacher knowledge is, how it is acquired, and what cognitive processes are involved during teaching and learning to teach (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Richards and Farrell (2005) summarize four different views on the conceptualisation of teacher learning. The first regards teacher learning as the development of a scope of different skills. These skills are seen as discrete and can be mastered one at a time. Teacher training sessions are organised to provide and model the skills for teachers to master them. However, new information is treated in isolation from teachers' existing beliefs or knowledge systems; teacher learning may not happen in this way (Malderez & Bodocsky, 1999). This view of learning as a product of teaching was dominant, including in

the language-based disciplines (e.g. linguistics, phonetics, SLA), was the major foundation for the area of second language teacher education (SLTE) in the past (Freeman, 2002).

Secondly, teacher learning is seen as a complex cognitive process including different forms of knowledge and beliefs which influence teaching and learning. In this view, a TE or TD programme encourages teachers to explore their beliefs and thinking processes and how these inform their teaching. TD programmes should function to help them explore their beliefs and assist teachers with assimilating new ideas into their existing personal theory, rather than try to transmit information about the new idea and to persuade teachers of its effectiveness (Karavas-Doukas, 1996). From this perspective, currently the area of SLTE is more influenced by the domain of teacher cognition (Borg, 2006).

The third view regards teacher learning as personal construction; that is, knowledge is actively constructed by learners rather than passively received. Learning is seen as involving recognition and reconstruction and it is through these processes that knowledge is internalised. Therefore, TE/TD in this view emphasises teachers' own contribution to learning and encourages teachers to develop self-awareness and personal interpretation through activities such as self-monitoring and journal writing. The view that learning can be achieved only by and for oneself conforms to the European view of TE (Mann, 2005). Teacher's knowledge including PK, PCK and beliefs can be described as "well-developed," if expressed (or 'espoused') beliefs are consistent with pedagogical behaviours (Williams & Burden, 1997). That is, there is a synergy between reported beliefs and classroom practice.

Finally, teacher learning is viewed as reflective practice. Reflection means

critical examination of experiences; this process can lead to better understanding teaching practices and routines. This has led to the notion of reflective teaching; that is, teaching accompanied by collecting information on one's teaching as the basis for critical reflection, through such procedures as self-monitoring, observation and case studies (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Reflective teaching has become a dominant paradigm in SLTE/TD programmes around the world since the 1990s (Richards, 1998). A great deal of empirical research has been conducted into how teachers actually develop as reflective practitioners, learning reflection, and how teacher education influences such development, (e.g. Farrell, 2001; Borg, 2011). However, there is little research on the application of reflection to learn some approaches or pedagogy. Wyatt's (2009) study is one of the examples. Another example is in Hong Kong secondary school contexts; Pennington (1996 in Liou, 2001) found that reflective training was useful to make teachers change their attitude toward process writing.

The current study focuses on teachers' ongoing professional development and thus takes an integrative view of teacher learning as a cognitive process, personal construction, and reflection on action. Reflection should not only be viewed as critical examination of experiences, but also critical examination of beliefs about teaching and learning (Farrell, 2001). After beliefs are explored, the next step is to reflect how the beliefs affect teachers' practice.

With complexity theory in mind, it is believed that reflection is key to exploring how teachers' beliefs interact with their practice in their context, which will be discussed below. Also, through reflection on practice, received knowledge could be acquired and become experiential knowledge, as discussed in 3.3.3.1. In

order to maximise teachers' professional growth, the sociocultural perspective is also often taken since it can provide rationales for teachers to benefit from forming a community of practice (Richards, 2008). These all constitute the theoretical basis of this study, and will be discussed in the following two sections.

3.4.3 Reflection and professional developments

Since John Dewey first outlined the concept of reflection in 1933, increasing numbers of teachers and teacher educators have examined issues in teaching through the lens of reflection (Stanley, 1998). Dewey's (1933) concept of 'reflective thought' has had a profound influence on the teaching profession. 'Reflective thought' is defined as 'active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends' (p. 9). Many scholars have followed this line, including Van Manen (1977; 1995), Schön (1983), Kemmis (1988), Zeichner and Liston (1997), Hay (1997), and Richards and Farrell (2005).

Many writers (e.g. Farrell, 2001; Hatton & Smith, 1995) argue that the distinction should be made between 'reflection' and 'critical reflection'. They argue that reflection is not merely thinking about actions; contexts and assumptions or beliefs should also be considered. Kemmis (1988) views reflection as action-oriented, and confined in social, political frames. Bailey *et al.* (2001) also draw the attention to the interaction with contexts. On the other hand, some professionals (e.g. Brookfield, 1995; Hayes, 1997) emphasise that questioning of assumptions is key to critical reflection. In this view, Dewey's (1933) idea of reflection is considered to be critical since it contains the aspect of belief grounded in context. It is widely understood that teacher's beliefs play an active

and dynamic role in leading their classroom practice, and have a great impact on accepting new knowledge (Borg, 2005). Therefore, it is important for teachers to explore what is underlying their classroom practice and then question, analyse and examine it critically; the process and their findings may promote their continuing professional development (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Critical reflection is also viewed from hierarchy levels of reflection. Van Manen (1977) proposed three levels of reflection. At the first level, technical reflection, the main concern is the efficiency and effectiveness of means to serve certain goals; practitioners merely technically apply educational knowledge or basic curriculum principles. The goals and the surrounding contexts are not considered. This is not different from Schön's (1983) 'technical knowledge'. At the second level, every educational choice is assumed to be based on a value commitment to some interpretive framework by those involved in the planning of a curriculum. The means, goals, the assumptions which those are based on, and the actual outcomes are open to criticism or modification. The third and highest level, critical reflection, addresses the question of the worth of educational goals and experiences within wider socio-historical and politico-cultural contexts. In addition, critical reflection also calls for considerations involving moral and ethical criteria. At this level, practitioners make judgments about whether action is equitable, just and respectful of persons. This view is echoed by Zeichner and Liston (1987). However, this kind of reflection is rarely reported. In Farrell's (1999) study of reflectivity, the participants stayed at the descriptive level of reflection. Similar finding was found in Abou Baker El-Dib (2007). O'Sullivan (2002) studied how 99 teachers at 31 primary school teachers in Namibia could develop reflective practice. She found that their reflection was below technical rationality. She concluded if the programme had been extended, the teachers

should have been able to move to the stage of technical rationality.

Another example of critical reflection is Richards and Ho's (1998:164-165) seven criteria of teachers' development: (1) a greater variety of types of critical reflectivity; (2) being better able to come up with a new understanding of theories; (3) being better able to reflect across a time span and experiences; (4) being better able to go beyond the classroom to broader contexts; (5) being better able to evaluate both positively and negatively; (6) being better able to solve problems; (7) greater focus on 'why' questions. These criteria are considered covering the first two levels of Van Manen's (1977) model, but moral and ethical aspects are not stressed here.

The concept of reflective practitioners also extends its influence to second language education. Wallace's (1991) book highlights reflection in TD programme for foreign language teachers. Richards' (1998) book stresses the notion that critical reflection is key for L2 teachers' continuing professional growth. Farrell (2007) discussed the application of reflective teaching to language education. Mann and Walsh (2013) believe that reflective practice has become an orthodoxy in TESOL area.

The rationale for reflective teaching also provides grounds for the implementation of communicative approaches. This argument can be explained with Van Manen's (1977) three levels of reflectivity. For the first level, the rationale for FonF or communicative approaches is that, to recap, FonFs or FonM alone is not sufficient for L2 acquisition. Communicative approaches can provide a variety of methods to put these principles into practice, added as alternatives to teachers' practice. As Shulman (1987) suggests, teachers should be flexible in choosing the most appropriate method to represent the particular

form from a method repertoire, as content knowledge. To this end, teachers need to draw on their curricular knowledge to organise and present the content to make it comprehensible to their learners. They also need to rely on their knowledge of student understanding. The teachers' representation of form should take it into consideration; that is, strategic knowledge of PCK comes into play. TD programmes should provide information regarding students' attitudes and assist teachers to reflect on that, as Van Manen (1995) suggests to teachers.

To progress to the second level, it is hoped that the TD programme in my study can activate teachers' critical reflection on the means and goals, and their underlying assumptions, and the outcomes they lead to. It also aims for the highest level: 'there exists no repressive dominance, no asymmetry or inequality among the participants of the educational processes' (Van Manen, 1995). In many EFL contexts today, traditional approaches or methods still dominate. These modes often involve with teacher-centredness and teacher dominance, and uneven power relationship between the teacher and students. Communicative approaches provide options for teachers and empower students.

3.4.4 The reflective cycles

Continuing the explanation of received and experiential knowledge presented in section 3.3.3.1, Wallace (1991) explains how received knowledge could be transformed into experiential knowledge in iterative cycles, i.e. the concept of reflective cycles. This section will discuss the most cited ones: Wallace (1991), Kolb (1984) and Ur's (1996) 'Enriched Reflection' model.

Wallace's (1991) model starts with finding and understanding trainee teachers' mental constructs. Stage 2 illustrates the interaction between the received knowledge and experiential knowledge, as Figure 3.10 below shows. The argument is that received knowledge could be acquired through experiment in practice, via reflection, becoming experiential knowledge, and may also become stored in teachers' existing mental constructs (conceptual schemata). Following this, the process of teacher learning should be made reciprocal, rather than one-way transmission. That is, when trainees reflect on the 'received knowledge' in the light of classroom experience, it could feedback into the 'received knowledge' parts. Reflection is highlighted in this model; it interacts with practice and forms the reflective cycle. Mangubhai *et al.* (2005) found that most of the teachers in their study possessed the theoretical knowledge of CLT, but such knowledge did not seem to inform their practice. I stipulate the reason may lie in their lack of such practice and reflection.

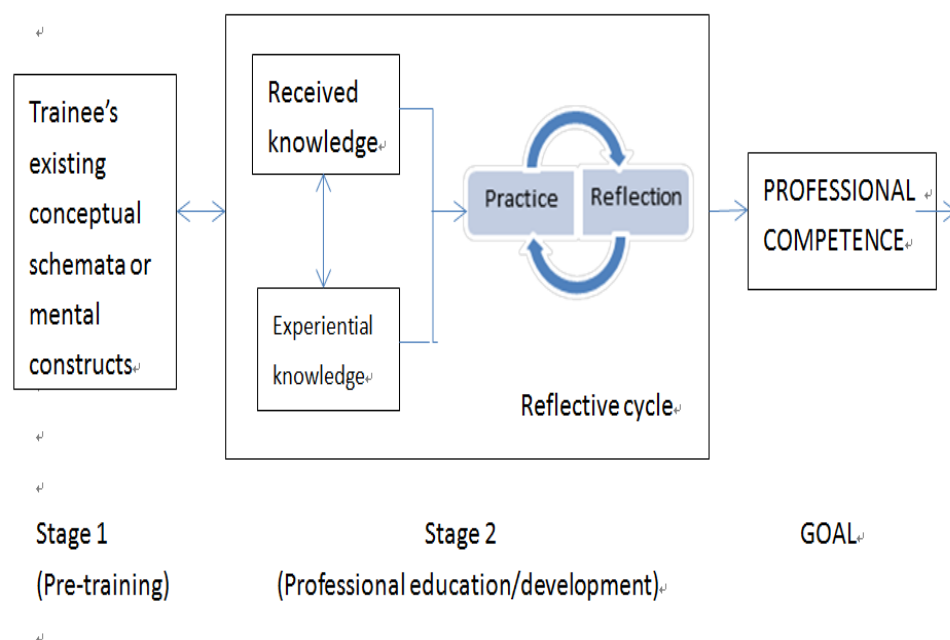


Figure 3.10 Reflective practice model of professional education/development (Wallace, 1991: 49)

Wallace (1991) is aware of the gap between theory and practice, and stresses repeated interaction between practice and reflection in a continuous cycle to bridge the gap. However, he did not discuss the role of teachers' beliefs, nor did he address the influence of contextual factors.

Another well-known model is Ur's (1996) 'Enriched Reflection' model, which also sets out to bridge this gap. Her model is derived from Kolb's (1984) work (Figure 3.11). Kolb's reflective model comprises four modes of learning: 'observation and reflection', 'formation of abstract concepts and generalisation', 'testing implications of concepts in new situation' and 'concrete experience'; any of these can be the start point, but they need to be followed in a recursive cycle.

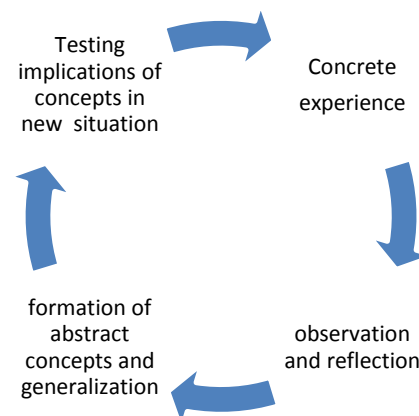


Figure 3.11 Kolb's reflective model (1984: 21)

Ur (1996) changes Kolb's four terms into 'reflective observation', 'abstract conceptualisation', 'active experiments' and 'concrete experience'. Notably, she extends Kolb's model with external sources of input to compensate for the drawback of teachers being the only source of knowledge in this model. These external resources include other people's observation, input from professional research, other people's experiments, and vicarious experience. The following diagram (Figure 3.12) illustrates these eight elements.

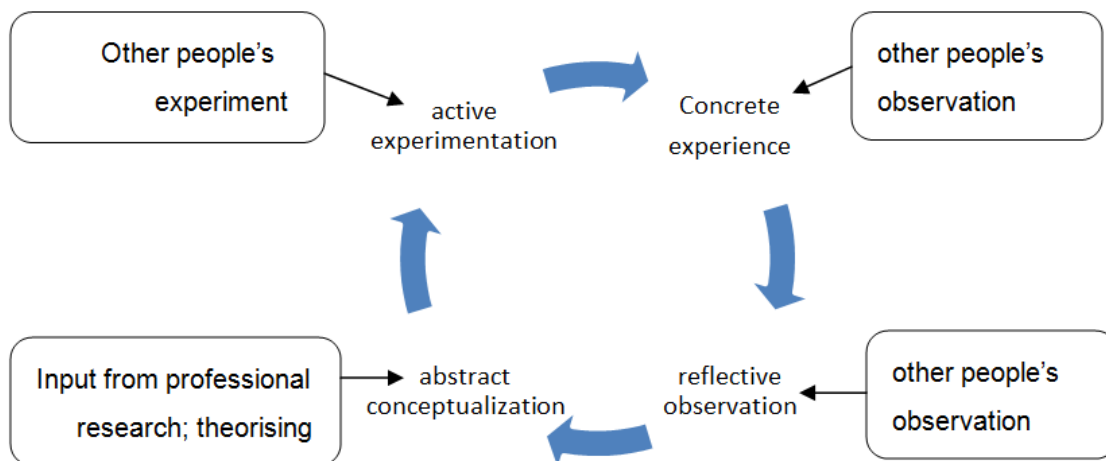


Figure 3.12 Ur's (1996:7) 'Enriched Reflection' model

All three models are similar in highlighting the elements of action, reflection, observation, theorising practice and practising theory, and the recursive sequence. Ur did not emphasise the role of beliefs, either, but highlighted the importance of teachers' beliefs when she advocates 'situated methodologies' in Ur (2013a). The framework for this current study includes teacher knowledge and teachers' beliefs, which are believed to be key elements to explain the gap, and give weight to contextual factors. The external resources are also highlighted in this programme. It was organised in a collaborative learning community to experiment and experience practice with colleagues, and it infused the abstract conceptualisation with formal knowledge or theory, as Ur (1996) urges.

3.4.5 Sociocultural aspects and reflection

Apart from the increasing attention to teacher cognition in second language teaching education (SLTE) (Borg, 2006), the sociocultural perspective view also has become dominant recently (Lantolf, 2000). The sociocultural perspective can provide a rationale for the benefit from teachers forming a community of practice for professional growth (Richards, 2008). To quote Richards (2008: 169), '[r]ather than teaching being viewed as the transfer of knowledge, a sociocultural perspective views it as creating conditions for the co-construction of knowledge and understanding through social participation'. Teachers' practitioner knowledge in communicative approaches can be developed collaboratively with peers and teacher educators. Since schools usually have teachers with different experience, and expertise of knowledge and skill, putting these teachers together in TD or TE activities for sharing knowledge and experience is valuable for their professional growth (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

The application of sociocultural theory to teacher education is not unlike that of second language learning. Reflective practice has achieved a status of orthodoxy in the area SLTE since the 1990s (Richards, 2008). However, Mann and Walsh (2013: 291) argue that it has achieved such a status in the TESOL area without 'a corresponding data-led description of its value, processes and outcomes'. They point out that reflection relies unduly on individual, written forms as a tool, i.e. reflective writing. Therefore, they promote more account of spoken form, carried out collaboratively and dialogically.

This view is not original; for example, Hatton and Smith (1995) promote collaborative rather than individual approaches to reflection. They also suggest trainees work together as "critical friends" to support each other. Bolitho and

Wright (1997: 26) also believe that the group is a powerful resource in learning, noting 'We can see ourselves better through how others see us'. Similar benefits are also found in a study by Lee (2008), which concludes the collaborative environment during the planning of their lessons enabled the participants to gain insights into how to improve their teaching. Puchner and Taylor (2006) find that a good school culture of collaboration between teachers could benefit both teachers and students in terms of achievement.

3.4.6 Methods for the reflective teacher development (TD) programme

The research described in this study aims to explore how a TD programme can assist the EFL teachers in developing a context-sensitive communicative approach and in its implementation. Informed by the discussion of the potential challenges, the TD programme needs to fulfill the following functions: (1) to provide the teachers with knowledge about the approaches for them to understand, (2) to explore their beliefs and enhance reflection, (3) to assist in solving problems arising in any stages, and (4) to gather and give them any information needed. The first four goals are also means to achieving the ultimate goal: this research aim.

Guided by the theoretical framework, opportunities need to be provided for teachers to reflect in order to have a further understanding of their teaching and the underlying beliefs (Farrell, 2001). A variety of methods have been suggested as means for reflection. The methods include workshops (Richards & Farrell, 2005), observation (Wallace, 1991; Richards, 1998), group discussion (Mann & Walsh, 2013), journal writing (Richards, 1998), and action research (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Wallace, 1998; Mann, 2005).

3.4.6.1 Workshops

A workshop is used as a teacher learning activity to achieve the completion of a specified task within a certain time and space (Wallace, 1991). Using workshops is often the best way to carry out a particular professional activity which provides opportunities for teachers to examine their beliefs and perspectives and to reflect on their own teaching practices (Richards & Farrell, 2005). This is done collaboratively, and therefore, breaking the isolation is another advantage of a workshop. Isolation in their classrooms from their peers can be broken by connecting to people in the same profession when joining a workshop (Bailey *et al.*, 2001).

Since teacher learning can clearly not take place from just one short session, a series of coherent workshops should be organised with goals, procedures, materials, and so on in advance (Ellis, 1990). In the workshops, four goals need to be achieved: providing the teachers with the input knowledge of the approaches, promoting reflective teaching, feeding back with students' attitudes and perceptions, and finally enabling them to put all these in designing lesson plans. The teacher educator also needs to prepare materials to meet these goals and consider the procedures (Ellis, 1990).

Providing received knowledge of communicative approaches is one of the main goals and functions of this TD programme. Parrot (1993) views this received knowledge as an element in developing professional competence. Professional development needs to be challenged by exposure to external input, or what Ur (1996) terms 'input from professional research'. Richards and Farrell (2005) provide a comprehensive framework of TE. The received knowledge includes theories and practical examples of their application. The theories provided will

involve its rationales, principles and definitions and so on. The practical examples can be a variety of types: readings from professional journals and video, audio, or written recordings of real lessons, transcripts of lessons, lesson plans and outlines, and case studies. The examples from those data can both be good models or bad ones for the teachers to critique. In addition, data can be readings from research articles or books regarding the theory or its practice. All of these seem applicable in the workshops of the current TD programme. However, the current study adopted video recordings rather than audio ones, since videos can provide more complete records than audio (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Teachers can not only hear but also observe the classroom dynamics. In relation to the choice of video recordings, this TD programme used the teachers' own observation data, which would encourage more engagement, as Mann and Walsh (2013) comment. A single activity can make use of one type of data or a combination (Ellis, 1990). Commercial videos of modeling teaching made by TEFL course, e.g. British Council, may not seem relevant to the teachers in different contexts, and therefore, they would ignore the models (Wallace, 1991). For this reason, the teachers were provided with the examples showing how communicative approaches can be used with their textbook in the workshops.

The teacher educator also needs to consider what to ask the teachers to do with the data. The types of tasks they can do are adapting (e.g. an activity to include information gap), preparing (e.g. a lesson plan), comparing (e.g. two lesson plans), evaluating or improving (e.g. an activity in a case study), etc. (Ellis, 1990). These tasks all seem reasonable for teachers to perform, depending on the time available.

The teacher educator's lesson plan should also include appropriate procedures

to exploit these activities. Procedures can be lectures, group/pair discussion, workshops, demonstrations, or individual assignment (Ellis, 1990). Lectures are a direct way to provide input, and they are used in this programme due to its time efficiency. Group discussion is a common procedure in this small group of four (three participants and the educator/researcher). Workshops are envisaged to be an opportunity for teachers to apply the principles of communicative approaches to plan their lessons. Ellis' procedure of demonstrations is equivalent to classroom observation. Teachers could evaluate, discuss, or comment on some critical events based on the audio recordings, transcriptions or lesson plans/outlines of their observed lessons. With Richards and Farrell's (2005) suggestions for quality workshops in mind, the teacher educator should provide direct input for teachers to compare it with their collective ideas. The teacher educator should also be able to provide informed answers to questions that they raise. For a workshop to have impact, they suggest follow-up tasks to see how the teachers make use of what they have learnt in further practice. This is one goal which this research wants to achieve.

The data for teachers is not only planned at the preparation stage and provided as scheduled, but also reactive in the process of reflective cycles. The process of bridging the perceived gap between theories and practice is what Ur (1996) terms 'abstract conceptualisation'. In this process, teachers need supplementation from an external source of knowledge, i.e. 'input from professional research', the element in the third pair of Ur's model. Personal theory involving personal belief is needed to be compared with 'normative' input from professional research. To assist teachers to develop the synergy between theory and practice, as is the aim of this study, the researcher should observe their conceptualisation of communication approaches and provide prompt input

to suit their needs of the moment.

In the workshops, the other main aim is to understand and help teachers to understand their beliefs by means of reflection. As discussed earlier, teacher learning is no longer viewed as a product of transmitting teaching; providing received knowledge alone is insufficient for professional growth and should be coupled with reflection on beliefs and practice. However, articulating personal belief is not always possible. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, beliefs may not be consciously held, and secondly, teachers may not possess the language to express them. Thirdly, some may worry that their beliefs may not be socially acceptable, and be reluctant to make them public. Therefore, it would be ineffective to ask teachers directly about their beliefs about teaching, so it is suggested beliefs are accessed indirectly (Kagan, 1992). Thus, this study will use the indirect methods including think aloud techniques when asking teachers to analyse classroom vignettes or view their own class recordings, and employing stimulated recall in interviewing to ask teachers to recall particular class events and decisions (Kagan, 1992; Gass & Mackey, 2010).

3.4.6.2 Observation

For better understanding of one's own practice, self-monitoring/observation is a useful method (Bailey *et al.*, 2001). Observing one's own behaviours as a teacher helps identify where the problems lie so the teacher may wish to make improvements. For example, the teacher may find that he/she over-relies on a single method of correcting students' errors. After the reflective observation, the teacher may affirm and assure his/her practice, and thus develop a sense of confidence (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

In relation to the discussion of the advantages of learning with a community of practice from a sociocultural perspective, the reflection on self-observation can be enhanced by working with a peer/critical friend to observe each other's classes. Experiential knowledge can be gained from self-observation as well as from observing peers (Ur, 1996). Reflective observation can also be enhanced by colleagues' collaboration (Brookfield, 1995); through discussion with peers, teachers can acquire richer results than on individual basis (Wallace, 1991). Brookfield (1995) introduces the concept of 'lens of reflection'. He suggests that teachers view what they do and think as teachers through four distinctive lenses, one of which is colleagues' observation. By doing this, teachers can think about how other practitioners view them, and compare it with how they view themselves. This also helps teachers to step out from their self-confined space. The programme in Wyatt (2009) not only provided teachers with the input (knowledge of CLT), but also observed the process of carrying out CLT and provided feedback for her to forge onto a synergy between her beliefs and practice. However, in Farrell's (2001) word of caution, observations could be sensitive to teachers in both Asian and non-Asian contexts, as one of his participant points out that she felt uneasy being observed. Therefore, he suggests that the way that observations are incorporated should be negotiated by each teacher.

In order to reflect on practice, teachers need records and feedbacks. The records are often referred as "evidence", and this echoes as early as Dewey's (1933: 11) suggestion that 'reflection implies belief on evidence'. Some refer to these records as data (e.g. Mann & Walsh, 2013) which include audio/video or written recordings of a lesson, or feedback from a peer who has observed the lesson, and from students.

Keeping records of a lesson can be done in a written form, for example, lesson reports. Lesson reports record what actually happened during the lesson, and are suggested to be completed soon after a lesson and made as detailed as possible (Richards & Farrell, 2005). A written transcript of a lesson is suggested to provide a version which can be shared with colleagues. Due to the heavy workload of teachers in Taiwan, and the voluntary nature of this study, I video-recorded their lessons, and wrote lesson reports and transcripts for the teachers to reflect on later.

These records and transcriptions were used for an *ad hoc* approach- an observation framework designed for a specific purpose in specific contexts (Wallace, 1991). The specific purpose here is to observe the teachers' knowledge growth in communicative approaches. Therefore, an observation framework was set up for this purpose, as has been elaborated in section 3.2.2. The teachers were provided with the framework for them to evaluate and reflect on their class.

With these variety types of data, several activities can be carried out for critical reflection. Journal writing (Richards & Ho, 1998) is a commonly used method. Research has shown different results of the effectiveness of journal writing on reflective teaching. Mann (2005: 109) comments that it is 'a productive form of reflection, introspection and self-evaluation'. The teacher in Wyatt's study (2009) reflected through journal writing in her action research. Others, such as Richards and Ho (1998), Farrell (2001) conclude that it may not engage teachers in critical reflection. As noted earlier, to avoid adding workload to the teachers, they will not be required to complete any written forms. Instead, the TD programme will rely on oral reports and group discussion.

3.4.6.3 Group discussions

An advantage of discussion within a group of peers, as Farrell (2001) suggests, is the potential to offer teachers opportunities to expose themselves to different viewpoints. In his study of investigating how reflection could promote the professional development for experienced EFL teachers, he reported that the group members could test out ideas, ask questions and receive prompt responses, and learn from one another. However, the process of sharing and recalling may be painful; therefore, a non-threatening, trustworthy and supportive atmosphere is suggested (Farrell, 2001).

Reflection seeks to make sense of the observation and is usually aided by discussion. Discussion for promoting reflective teaching can be led in two ways; in one-to-one interviews with the researcher, or in focused group interviews in the workshops. Either way takes advantage of dialogic collaboration. Taking a socio-cultural view of learning, Mann & Walsh (2013) promote dialogic/collaborative view of reflection. They believe that reflection does not occur in isolation, but in discussion with others since the process of social interaction forms the internalized psychological tools that promote reflection.

Discussions and observations are two sides of the same coin in this TD programme since it was planned to use video recorded from observations for discussion. Video recordings of observations for the teacher who taught the lesson is used for stimulated recall, and for other teachers who watch them, they serve as cued response scenarios. They are useful tools to elicit teachers' stated beliefs by reflecting on them (Basturkmen *et al.*, 2004). The video recordings of

the actual lessons could provide practitioners with opportunities to recall specific incidents and make comments on them, and also can act as stimulus to provide 'talking-points' in the hope of promoting discussion (Mann & Walsh, 2013).

3.4.6.4 Action research (AR), TD and reflections

Reflection, as a teacher development activity, is key to explore how teachers' beliefs interact with their practice in their context (Stanley, 1998), and action research (AR) is a very useful method for carrying out the reflective model and bring it to an academic research level (Richards & Farrell, 2005). AR has reflection at its core (Mann & Walsh, 2013). Wallace (1991) views action research as a slight extension of reflective practice with more rigor, and can lead to more effective outcome. Distinguished from other methods, action research is more systematic in collecting evidence, and this enables the teacher to become a researcher (Wallace, 1998). It can be done individually or collaboratively (Richards & Farrell, 2005). AR is the only method that has the capability to incorporate all the elements which form the theoretical framework of this study. It is superordinate to all the methods used in this study, i.e. workshops, observations, and group discussions.

Action research has been increasingly invoked in teacher education. According to Noffke (2009), action research has been applied by many universities and ministries of education (e.g. Singapore and Hong Kong), and prominent professional organisations as part of their further education and 'improvement' strategies. As mentioned earlier, the aim of the TD programme is to facilitate the growth of teachers' practitioner knowledge of communicative approaches. According to Richards and Farrell (2005), teachers often report that there are

significant changes to their understanding of teaching after carrying out AR. Re-examining the relationship between reflection, TD and AR justified the choices of reflection for teachers' professional growth, and action research as the most appropriate for this study.

3.5 Research questions

A conclusion that can be reached from reviewing the literature is that communicative approaches are potentially beneficial to EFL learners. However, for a variety of reasons, teachers rarely use such an approach. One way to address this issue is to take commonly cited obstacles into account when planning a TD programme. This is not a new suggestion, yet few studies have investigated the impact of a TD programme designed with this in mind. My study aims to fill this research gap through using AR to explore how a TD programme might help teachers realign their beliefs about communicative approaches, and develop their knowledge about them within their own particular teaching context. This can be broken down into three research questions (RQ):

RQ1: How does the teachers' practitioner knowledge in adapting communicative approaches develop within their own particular teaching context?

RQ2: In what way(s) does the teacher development programme help with the development?

RQ3: In what ways do contextual factors (including students' reactions and other situations which emerge) influence the adoption of communicative approaches?

The project was carried out at three phases. Phase 1 was the preparation stage, phase 2 was the main implementation stage and phase 3 final evaluation stage.

The next chapter explains the methodology that was used in each of these phases.

Chapter 4 Design of Enquiry

This chapter introduces the philosophical framework of the research, methodology and the research setting and participants (4.1-4.3). Data collection methods (4.4-4.7), data collection procedure (4.8) and how the data were analysed (4.9) will subsequently be introduced. This will be followed by a discussion of the trustworthiness of the study (4.10) and finally ethical considerations (4.11).

4.1 Philosophical framework

Philosophical or theoretical assumptions are assumptions, concepts or propositions that a researcher holds and bring to their study. They may be held unconsciously but influence what in the real world is being researched and how (Wellington, 2000). Therefore, researchers should explore their theoretical assumptions and make them explicit to readers (Wellington, 2000; Creswell, 2007).

These assumptions viewed, in terms of ontology, epistemology, and methodology, are also referred to as paradigms by many (e.g. Mertens, 1998; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006) while Creswell (2007) calls them worldviews. Ontology concerns what exists, what there is to know, and its nature (Grix, 2004). Epistemology is concerned with knowledge, ways of knowing, and also with the nature of the relationship between the knower and what can be known (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Methodology considers how knowledge can be acquired, and subsequently determines the choice of methods, which refer to the precise procedures used to acquire the knowledge (Grix, 2004). Regarding the

relationship between ontology, epistemology and methodology, some, e.g. Crotty (1998) and Grix (2004) believe that researchers' ontological stance influences their views on epistemology. These assumptions consequently underpin their choices of methodology and research methods. This view questions the belief that researchers may simply start with research questions. However, neither view conflicts with Searle's (1995) view that a researcher who holds an objectivist ontology can also hold a constructivist epistemology, and vice versa. In the following sections, I will focus on two paradigms which fit my investigation well: social constructivism and interpretivism.

4.1.1 Social constructivism

Social constructivists argue that knowledge is not like a picture which passively corresponds to the external world. They view reality as constructed through human activity. The underlying base of social constructivism is that the world is much more complex than people can experience; therefore, people put their experience together in a way that makes sense to them (von Glaserfeld, 1995). People understand the world they live in from their own perspectives, and live in different contexts. Therefore, there are multiple meanings which are subjective but constructed socially. These subjective meanings are formed through interaction with others, and in this case and are labelled social constructivism. With von Glaserfeld's explanation of the active construction of reality, the following assertions on social constructivism, summarised by Creswell (2007) are plausible. First, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Second, people develop subjective meanings of their experience; different people may construct different meanings; thus, the meanings are varied

and multiple. These two views lead to the third point: research into reality should rely as much as possible on participants' perspectives. A fourth point thus takes shape: theories and patterns should be generated inductively from the participants, rather than from existing theories.

Applying a social constructivist view to learning implies that learning does not take place only within an individual, nor is it a passive development of behaviours shaped by external forces. Rather, it is a social process; learning occurs when learners are engaged in social activities. This view of the world also applies to L2 classrooms (Richards, 2003). Many scholars in the L2 area, e.g. van Lier (1988), Prabhu (1992), Johnson (1995) and Seedhouse (1996), hold social constructivist views and believe that the patterns of language which occur in a second language classroom are socially constructed by the participants (cited in Walsh, 2002).

Similar understandings of knowledge are expressed in pragmatism, postmodernism, feminist epistemologies and relativism. A relativist view is that truth and meanings are social-cultural constructions, and they are interpreted differently from culture to culture. Relativism is also an epistemological foundation for interpretivism, another theoretical stance; thus, social constructivism is often not separated from interpretivism (Mertens, 1998; Creswell, 2007:20). However, they should be viewed as two different stances even though some features overlap, as explained below (Grix, 2004).

4.1.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism was developed as a response to perceived shortcomings of

positivism for social enquiry. A key feature of interpretivism is its concerns with multiple, subjective meanings and interpretations, founded in hermeneutics and phenomenology (Mack, 2010; Mertens, 1998).

Hermeneutics studies interpretive meaning or understandings in historical texts (Klein & Myers, 1999), while phenomenology highlights understanding of social phenomena from human beings' subjective interpretations and their perceptions of lived experience, rather than placing impositions on experience in advance (Cresswell, 2007). With these foundations, the central idea of interpretivism is to understand social phenomena rather than to explain them, and the understanding should be obtained through direct experience with people and from within (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Interpretivism attempts to gain access to people's understandings of their situations and to their accounts for their own actions, and gain understandings based on those.

Klein and Myers (1999) believe the most fundamental principle for interpretive research is the hermeneutic circle. They argue that understandings are reached 'by iterating between considering the interdependent meaning of parts and the whole that they form' (p. 72). That is, the process of interpretation involves a number of iterations forming a hermeneutic circle whereby a partial and initial understanding of the parts contribute to a global understanding of the whole context, and this in turn feeds back to a better understanding of the parts. Thus, through the repeated circles, a complex whole of the shared meanings emerges. This fits with my views on understanding the issues of the implementation of communicative approaches.

Interpretivist views of understanding are also influenced by Max Weber's concept of 'interpretive understanding'. He argues that understanding of human

behaviours includes 'to gain an explanation of its causes, its course and its effects' (Weber, 1964: 29 in Bloomer & James, 2003). Uniform causal relations could be assumed in studying natural science, but cannot be applied to classroom realities where teachers and learners construct meaning (Mack, 2010). Klein and Myers (1999) add that the analysis of reasons may involve understanding issues of values, power relationship and economics; in other words, aspects brought into focus by critical theory, which as Bloomer and James (2003) assert, seek 'to enable people to become aware of contradictions and distortions in their own belief systems and to 're-see' (or theorise afresh) their situations prior to changing them' (p. 252). The relevance of these perspectives will be further discussed in the section on action research.

For this investigation, I held a social constructivist ontology, believing that meanings are formed through interaction with others. I believe that classroom realities are co-constructed by the teacher and students, the products of their interactions, subjective and context-specific. I held an interpretivist position of epistemology, which seeks knowledge from the participants' interpretation and their interactions within their context. Following the interpretivist suggestion of understanding from within, however, I am aware that the research process and findings concluded may be coloured by the researcher's interpretation and interactions with the participants (Klein & Myers, 1999).

4.2 Methodology- Action research (AR)

With my research aim in mind, in this section, I will explain how I believe action research (AR) fits my philosophical stances and theoretical framework, and thus is the best methodology for this study.

4.2.1 Philosophical bases of AR

Action research, as the name suggests, contains two main dimensions: action and research. Unlike other research, AR usually sets out to improve or change something within practitioners' own contexts (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Practical action is taken for this purpose. Although AR is based on practice, it includes a research dimension by taking a systematic approach to carry out investigations, collect data and analyse data; In addition, a set of criteria is needed for identifying improvement (Burns, 2010).

AR can fit positivist, interpretivist and critical paradigms. A typology corresponding to these different (philosophical) epistemological and research approaches defines technical, practical and critical AR (Burns, 2005). Technical AR is based on the natural sciences view that reality is measurable. This type of research tends to set out to test a particular intervention. The expert researcher provides the technical research expertise to the practitioners. Practical AR is rooted in Hermeneutics, and views reality as multiple, holistic, and constructed. The problem is defined in context. Practical AR aims 'to enable practitioners to interpret (and thereby change) their practice' (Norton, 2009: 53). In comparison, in practical AR, instead of the researcher identifying problems as the first mode, the researcher and practitioners identify problems together, and seek for mutual understandings to solve the problems (Eilks *et al.*, 2010).

The third type, critical/emancipatory AR, is based on critical theory where reality is viewed as inter-related with social and political power structures. The problem is defined in context in relation to emerging values (Burns, 2005). However, at the classroom level, Cain (2011) believes it is not possible that teachers' classroom-based action research can be entirely emancipatory. Teachers cannot

responsibly relinquish power when, for example, they need to make sure their students feel physically and emotionally secure. Also, it is the teachers' responsibility to plan how they can address learners' needs in order to cater for the wider institutional and social contexts. Yet, teachers can have critical discussions with their students to better meet their perceived needs.

Critical/emancipatory AR share some things in common with Heron and Reason's (1997) 'participatory paradigm', which views reality as 'the fruit of an interaction of the given cosmos and the way mind engages with it' (p. 279). They view knowledge of the world as arising from our experience of the world, not just as a matter of the mind constructing reality; rather, people's constructions are shaped by their minds interacting with reality. This view emphasises that to experience something is to participate in it. Thus understanding the realities in the classroom comes through the experience of participating in the classroom (Cain, 2011). Following this paradigm, participatory action research (PAR) suggests that AR should treat others as co-researchers rather than merely informants, and thus a critical community is formed (Cain, 2011). Doing PAR means 'sharing in the way research is conceptualized, practiced, and brought to bear on the life-world. It means ownership—responsible agency in the production of knowledge and the improvement of practice' (McTaggart, 1991: 171). In this sense, technical and practical AR differ from PAR.

The current study adopts Burns' (2005) idea of AR. In her view, AR fits participative, 'naturalistic' enquiry with its exploratory-interpretive underpinnings, which is influenced by social phenomenology and critical theory. AR is compatible with a social constructivist position on reality and with interpretivist ways of knowing, a view I share. This study not only intends to understand why the

implementation of communicative approaches has been difficult in some EFL contexts; more importantly, it aims to solve problems. To best investigate the factors and their influence on the implementation, I believe that this should be done in the place in which the teachers work. As Burns (2005) concludes, AR is viewed as a means to understanding and improving problematic social situations within those situations.

4.2.2 Compatibility between AR and the theoretical framework in this study

AR not only fits this study's philosophical stances, but also is compatible with its theoretical framework, which includes complexity theory, reflection, and sociocultural perspectives, as explained below.

4.2.2.1 AR and complexity theory

Regarding complexity theory, interpretivist views of realities fit it well, which suggests that researchers should perceive the whole context as presupposing the broader social context, and examine its impacts on the actions of individuals. Thus it requires researchers to search and document multiple view-points, along with the reasons for them (Klein & Myers, 1999). Action researchers also propose that research should include all the people involved (Robinson, 1993).

Drawing from past studies, the main reasons for the difficulties in implementing communicative approaches are assumed to be teachers' personal theories, lack of knowledge and contextual factors, as mentioned in previous chapters. These factors are believed to function and interact in a complex relationship with teachers' practice. Haggarty and Postlethwaite (2003) held a similar view and believed that AR would allow them to work by taking these factors into account

when developing an action plan which aimed to improve teaching and learning in a UK comprehensive school.

4.2.2.2 AR and reflection

Reflection is an embedded element in AR, and is perceived in this study as an important tool to examine teachers' beliefs and practice in order to improve their practice. Dewey's (1933) idea of knowledge involves reflection and action as requirements. This means that in order to acquire knowledge, people need to take action; however, this is not sufficient; they also need thinking, or reflection. That is, knowledge is acquired through action and reflection on action (Biesta & Burbules, 2003). To quote Wellington (2000: 21) 'the key aim of action research is to bring about critical awareness, improvement and change in a practice, setting or system. It therefore involves reflection, planning and action as key elements'. AR proceeds in a spiral, cyclical process. Researchers identify problems, plan a change (for improvement), act, and then observe what happens following the change. Reflection occurs at every stage of AR (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). They reflect on these processes and consequences to decide how to plan further action, and then repeat the cycle.

4.2.2.3 AR and sociocultural theory

AR can be conducted by individual teachers in their own teaching contexts, or they can collaborate with other teachers or a researcher (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Collaboration and participation are often addressed in discussion of AR. A collaborative process of AR is often advocated; that is, AR is best undertaken by groups of researchers/teachers acting collectively (Burn, 2005). This is

compatible with sociocultural theory (SCT), which is another theoretical base for this study. According to Crooks and Chandler (2001), teachers in many contexts claim the benefits of sharing their concerns and viewpoints. Three types of collaboration, with increasing extent of influence and responsibility of practitioners, are defined (Kemmis, 1988); firstly, co-option relationships, where the research is owned by the researchers; secondly, co-operative, where teachers work with researchers who share an interest in and facilitate their practice and often report it collaboratively; thirdly, collaborative AR (CAR), where researchers and teachers (or teachers working together) participate equally in the research agenda and are both the agents and the objects of the research.

CAR often involves collaboration between university-based researchers with funded projects, or working with groups of teachers located in different schools or teaching centres. What distinguishes these studies from those in co-option AR is that the researchers are usually working with teachers who are self-motivated with the purpose of developing their professionalism and more research abilities, rather than with 'captive audiences' who have no free choice concerning their inclusion in the research (Burns, 2005: 65). CAR is based on Vygotskian socio-cultural theory and Wenger's (1999) theory of community of practice (Kasi, 2010). Haggarty and Postlethwaite (2003) employed CAR, and Kasi (2010) also proposes it as an alternative model for the professional development of Pakistani EFL teachers. Kasi (2010) believes that CAR could not only empower teachers to make informed decisions, but also emancipate them from the transmission model of teacher training.

4.2.3 Participation in this AR study: open to changes

Different types of AR also determine the degrees of teachers' participation. Eilks *et al.* (2010) effectively describe the teachers' roles in the three modes of AR: technical AR where teachers act as consumers and supporters in the innovation; practical AR where teachers act as co-designers; and emancipatory AR where teachers act as initiators and designers of the innovation. There can be movement between the different modes, providing longer duration of AR. The researchers found that in such a case; initially, the teachers relied on the researchers' guidance and external expertise, but later, they developed more thoughtful decisions, and increased self-reflection, and thus evolved to become more the third mode of AR. Although practical AR and emancipatory AR are often viewed as stemming from different interests, Bloomer and James (2003) believe that understanding is a prerequisite of emancipation. The deepening of understanding would potentially lead to some degrees of emancipation. Practical activities for understanding and self-reflection could stimulate practitioners' critical thinking.

My ideal for the current study is emancipatory AR or PAR; however, aware of the voluntary nature of this study, aiming for practical AR or co-operative AR would be more realistic. From the discussion of the theoretical framework in Chapter 3, it appears that transmission of knowledge cannot make teacher learning happen, and the practical expectation for the teachers to consider alternatives methods of teaching is more urgent and basic than developing critical aspects. I, as a teacher educator, used action research to investigate how a teacher development programme can assist teachers in developing and implementing communicative approaches. In this sense, they and their students are my participants. It is hoped

that with my and their peers' mutual encouragement, their motivation would grow, and they would be willing to be more involved in AR; thus the study could evolve to become CAR. The role of a researcher in CAR should be a 'facilitator, partner, guide and coordinator' to facilitate the teachers in doing research and to help them develop their own theories and practices (Kasi, 2010: 113). A principal, a supervisor or a researcher are often considered as 'outsiders' in AR. Carr and Kemmis (1986) argue that it is common for outsiders in AR to provide material and moral support to action-researching teachers. The relationships established between outside 'facilitators' and action researchers can have a profound effect on the character of the action research undertaken. However, my philosophy was attempt to be an 'insider', 'i.e., to become part of the process to understand and to help EFL teachers in action research' (Kasi, 2010: 106).

As discussed in Chapter 3, in connection with levels of reflection, one of the reasons to promote communicative approaches is out of ethical and moral concerns. In emancipatory AR or PAR, it is expected that individual teacher participants could conduct their own action research concurrently. In that sense, the role of the teacher is redefined by giving teachers the means to set their own agendas for improvement; the responsibility for change or improvement is shifted from an outsider to teachers themselves (Richards & Farrell, 2005). I could only "encourage" them to be co-designers or even initiators in the AR, due to its voluntary nature. However, even with instrumental incentive coming with AR, teachers' participation should be democratic (Carr & Kemmis 1986). The relationship is illustrated as the diagram (Figure 4.1) below.

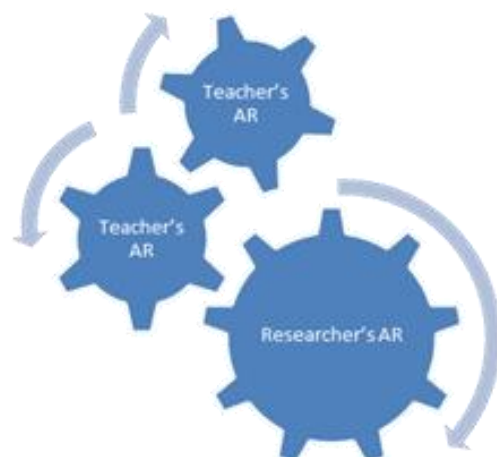


Figure 4.1 The ideal model of the current AR project

4.2.4 Scarcity of AR in ELT

While researching the literature regarding applying AR in investigating the implementation of communicative approaches, I found Burns' (2005) observation is still true. She observes that although AR has gained growing attention in the ELT area, published studies of AR in ELT are still very few. Within those few studies, more cases were involved in pre-service rather than in-service teachers, such as Crookes and Chandler (2001). A relevant article is Chang (2006), who conducted AR in a reputable senior high school in Taiwan, where the school culture aims to send their students to national/public universities. Drawing from seven years of fieldwork, she concluded that communicative approaches increased the students' motivation and achievement. As mentioned in Chapter One, the factors which influence the implementation of communicative approaches include the large size of class, and the tension which arises when preparing for entrance exams. Therefore, the success case reported by Chang (2006) encourages this study. However, her article focused more on reporting the benefits coming with the approaches than providing descriptions about what

happened during the AR and how the AR worked towards intervention.

4.3 Research setting and participants

With the research aim in mind, I cooperated with three volunteer teachers in a junior high school to implement communicative approaches. The teacher participants, Diana, Wendy and Ken, were recruited by my classmate, John, who went to the same Master in TESOL course in the UK (all pseudonyms). John played the role of 'the critical friend', who was a work colleague willing to provide critical views from an insider perspective. The role also includes being a mentor, being supportive and sympathetic (McNiff, 2016).

The research was set in one of their year 8 classes (aged 14-15). Each class had 30 students; that is, 90 students participated. For a school year, there are two semesters (terms). The first term normally starts in early September, finishes at the end of January; the second terms starts in February and finishes in June, i.e. about five months for a term. The main phase of the study was conducted in Term1, 2013. However, things were slightly different; the first term finished in the middle of January that year, earlier than usual.

4.4 Overview of methods

Philosophical or theoretical stances also determine the choice of research methods. For interpretivist researchers, data are generally qualitative and based on field work, notes, and transcripts of conversation/interviews (Wellington, 2000:16), as is the case in this study. Yet, some sections of questionnaires and observations are quantitative in order to acquire a broad picture (Macaro, 2006).

Within the framework of AR, three research methods were applied, namely, questionnaires, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, to best understand the issues at each stage.

Two paths are needed to address RQ 1: Path A observes to what extent the teachers apply the knowledge of communicative approaches introduced in the workshops to classroom practice; Path B listens to their reflections on their beliefs. If there is a synergy between their practice and beliefs, then it means their practitioner knowledge of it has developed. For Path A, an observation scheme was developed (in 3.2.2); I observed, for instance, how the teachers managed teacher talking time to increase students' participation in negotiated interaction. For Path B, one-to-one interviews were conducted promptly after each observation, and focus-group interviews were organised as group discussions in workshops to further explore their beliefs.

RQ 2 was addressed by interviewing teachers, along with the researcher's reflection and observations on the whole AR process. RQ 3 was investigated through listening to the students' voices (using interviews and questionnaires) as well as the teachers' voices (using interviews). This investigation of RQ 3 was juxtaposed with my observations of the students' reactions and any situations which emerged. Three data collection tools were used at three phases: in Phase 1, a questionnaire was conducted with all the students, and interviews with the teachers; in Phase 2, interviews with the students and teachers, and observations; in Phase 3, interviews with the teachers and the second questionnaire was conducted with all the students.

To summarise, three research methods were employed in this study; the RQs and the corresponding instruments for collecting the data are illustrated in the

table below (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 RQs and data collection instruments

instrument RQ	Interviews Phase 1,2,3	Observations Phase 2	Questionnaires Phase 1, 3
1 / knowledge growth	X	x	
2 /TD programme	X		
3 /contextual factors	X	x	x

In the following sections (4.5-4.7), the three methods are elaborated.

4.5 Questionnaires

The first method used in this study was a questionnaire for understanding RQ3 in terms of students' views. Questionnaires are suitable for collecting straightforward information, and can be conducted with large samples (Denscombe, 2008). These advantages were utilised in order to understand all the student participants' attitudes towards form-based and communicative-based instruction. Two questionnaires were conducted; the first one was distributed in Phase 1 to acquire baseline information, while the second one was distributed at the end of the programme to understand whether their attitudes changed over time and to evaluate the intervention.

The instruments were informed by the relevant literature. The development of the questionnaires considered item wording and format, avoiding double-barrelled, double negative questions (Oppenheim, 2000), and jargons and leading questions (Robson, 2011). The compilation also considered clear directions and logical questions (Hall & Hall, 1996; Pallant, 2007), along with the appropriateness and comprehension of language, which are key elements of content validation (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001).

4.5.1 First questionnaire

The first questionnaire was designed to understand the students' attitudes towards L2 teaching and learning in order to refer to when developing plans for the AR. It consists of a 5-point Likert type scale of 12 items and open-ended questions (refer to Appendix 4.1).

The instruments for measuring attitudes were tailored specifically for the purpose of this research. The construct, attitudes towards teacher talk and pair/group activities, was operationalised as follows:

The year 8 students responded to 6 statements regarding teacher talk and 6 statements regarding activities. For each statement, the respondents were asked to report their level of agreement on a 5-point scale (a=strongly agree, b=agree, c= neutral, d= not agree, e= strongly disagree). Answer 'a' was counted as 5 points while Answer 'e' 1 point. A higher score would indicate a more positive attitude towards the instruction and a lower score a more negative attitude after transforming variable values.

This study aimed to access the interpretations of the participants; therefore, open-ended questions were necessary. According to Dörnyei (2003), open-ended questions are needed due to the fact that researchers do not necessarily know the range of possible answers to those questions; they cannot provide categories covering these possibilities in advance. Question 13 was designed to ask about specific information from respondents themselves. Question 14 can be regarded as a clarification question to offer the respondents an opportunity to elaborate their thoughts. The open-ended questions were put at the end of questionnaire, as Dörnyei (2003) and Oppenheim (1992) suggest.

4.5.2 Second questionnaire

The main purpose of the second questionnaire in Phase 3 was to evaluate the implementation from students' viewpoints. The evaluation covers their attitudes towards communicative approaches, and their perceptions of gains and drawbacks of the approaches (refer to Appendix 4.2). Open-ended questions were designed to hear from them, rather than imposing the researcher's own theories upon them. Question 1 (Q1) aimed to explore the students' perception of their teachers' changes in pedagogy. Q2 and Q3 investigated whether the students thought they could benefit from communicative approaches. Q4 and Q5 investigated in what way the approaches may not cover their needs. Q6 aimed to understand whether their preference of L2 teaching and learning changed over time; they were required to compare their response with the first questionnaire. Except for Q3, which asked them to tick the appropriate box regarding their progress in seven areas (e.g. listening, grammar), all the questions were analysed with an inductive approach.

4.5.3 Pilot questionnaires

Both questionnaires were piloted. The results may provide the researcher with new ideas to modify the next step (Robson, 1993). The first questionnaire was piloted with students from a different year 8 class. While the students were filling in the questionnaire, they rarely asked me questions. With 30 valid copies (100% return rate), those students provided rich data. I put the 5-point data into the SPSS software. The result of Item 8 (i.e. *I do not like it when the teacher spends most of the time teaching grammar rules*) seemed slightly contradictory to all the other findings, which were pro-communicative approaches. This may be caused

by the small sample, and thus I decided to retain this item. No changes were made to the first questionnaire.

The second questionnaire was piloted with three students from Ken's class. The pilot students stated that they did not quite remember what they had written in the first questionnaire while answering Q6. Responding to this, I described the layout of Questionnaire 1, and informed them of the four most cited responses. Subsequently, I revised and put those responses below Q6, and while I was distributing the second questionnaire, I reminded them of the layout, as I did in the pilot.

4.6 Classroom observations

In AR studies, observations can provide the documentary evidence for the later reflection and evaluation (Burns, 1990). It must describe exactly what is done so that one can evaluate how the action matched the plans, and the circumstances of the action should also be recorded (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). In this study, to compensate for the limitations of collecting data through interviews, observation was necessary in order to evaluate the extent to which the teachers' practitioner knowledge in adapting communicative approaches develops (i.e. RQ1). Classroom observations also helped to identify any contextual factors which influenced the emerging adaption (RQ3). The information gathered was incorporated into the research cycles.

Based on the observation scheme (introduced in Section 3.2.5, Figure 3.8), the design of the observations was structured with a clear focus on what to look at, and observational categories with a broad coding scheme were prepared in

advance, i.e. two main areas, teacher talk and pair/group activities under the three criteria.

The observation scheme was designed to be flexible by the researcher keeping field notes to note any unexpected circumstances, allowing identification of codes emerging from what actually happens in the classroom. For the case when task-in-process diverts from task-as-plan, teachers need to use some strategies to re-engage their learners. An observation- behaviour and strategy sheet was developed for me to fill in during the observation with four main focuses, as Table 4.2 below shows (with examples):

Table 4.2 Observation-behaviour and strategy sheet

Activity Students' behaviour	Observed group (in every one minute)	Teachers' strategies/ note	Result to teachers' strategies
Activity: <i>Task A</i>	<i>8 groups</i>		
<i>Talk in L2</i>	<i>/// (groups)</i>	Students interact actively	
<i>Talk in L1</i>	<i>//</i>	Calling names (N)	The students start trying to communicate
<i>Silent</i>	<i>/</i>	walking to them (W)	
<i>Distraction</i>	<i>//</i>	(W) and ask if help needed (A)	
<i>Next minute</i>			
<i>Talk in L2</i>	<i>////</i>	Smile (☺)	
<i>Silent</i>	<i>//</i>	A	Respond to the teacher
<i>Talk in L1</i>	<i>///</i>	Shout (S)	

My task was to record objectively the teaching activities and students' reactions toward them. My stance was being a complete observer, which means I was present on the scene, but only listened and observed, and did not participate nor

interact with insiders (Baker, 2006). This allowed sufficient time and space to record data (Robson, 2002). Video-taping and field notes were taken throughout observations. Firstly, the activity which the teacher conducted was documented, together with students' responses to the teachers and what they did during the activity. I listened to their utterance and observed the teacher's movement and any strategies in respond to students' lingual or non-lingual behaviours. These behaviours and strategies were noted down on the observation sheet. The observation record was presented to individual teachers, and some events were selected for post-observation discussion with the teacher in private. Any events which seemed worthy to discuss with peers- and not to sensitive or offensive to any teachers- were discussed in the workshop.

One observation was conducted at Phase 1, referred to as the 'preliminary observation', to understand the teachers' pedagogical praxis. Afterwards, observations were conducted monthly in the five-month duration with the three classes. That is, there were 15 class observations in Phase 2. All the teachers were invited to observe each other's classes, so as to contribute to the group discussion in the workshops.

4.7 Interviews

Interviewing is probably 'one of the most common and powerful ways' for qualitative researchers to seek understanding human beings in the social world (Fontana & Frey, 1994: 361). A widely used typology divides interviews into structured, semi-structured, and unstructured; different types can lead to different depths of data (Robson, 2002). In a structured interview, there are specific questions or order of topics to be discussed whereas unstructured

interviews are the opposite. Unstructured interviews can be informal and allow interviewees to talk of their interest more freely within certain areas, and may consequently reduce the intervention from interviewers; however, interviewees may start to talk about something irrelevant to RQs and this requires researchers with high interview skills to deal with this situation (Robson, 2002).

Semi-structured interviews are widely used in qualitative research. They follow a predetermined set of questions but allow flexibility to emerge (Robson, 2002, 2011; Bryman, 2008). This research aimed to explore in-depth thoughts from participants and their interpretation. Since some individual thoughts and feelings cannot be directly observed, the follow-up interviews after observations provide a channel for participants to articulate their underlying assumptions or to expound their ideas (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001). Therefore, semi-structured interviews conform better to the purpose of this study, and were conducted in both one-to-one and focus groups.

In focus group interviews, the researcher and teachers can share ideas and allow others to put alternative points of view, and this may inspire more thoughts (Burns, 1999). The data generated from the group interview may be richer and beyond individual responses (Fontana & Frey, 2000). However, problems might well be associated with group interviews; as Fontana and Frey (2000) point out, individual talks may be influenced by group culture; also, the talks may be dominated by one person, for example. Thus, it requires interviewers to utilise more skills to deal with these.

In order to understand the students' reactions and attitudes towards the observed lesson, semi-structured, focus group interviews followed each classroom observation. For interviews with the teachers and the students, cued

response scenarios and stimulated recall techniques were applied. With cued response scenario techniques, the interviewer provides hypothetical scenarios of typical classroom situations or critical incidents and asks participants to comment on these and give rationales. The scenarios provided with stimulated recalls were based on what actually happened (Kagan, 1992; Gass & Mackey, 2010). All interviews were audio-taped.

4.7.1 Interviews with teachers at Phase 1

The first interview with the teachers were at the preparation stages, i.e. Phase1, to understand their knowledge including beliefs about L2 teaching and learning and communicative approaches which they brought to this programme (RQ1). Another main purpose was to understand their perceptions of challenges in adapting communicative approach (RQ 3). These were investigated through the one-to-one interviews. The information gathered was used to prepare the materials for the first few workshops. For the initial workshop, materials which may conflict less with the teachers' existing beliefs were used. The interview schedule is shown in Appendix 4.3.

4.7.2 Interviews with teachers at Phase 2

Following each classroom observation at Phase 2, there were firstly interviews with individual teachers for post-lesson discussion. This discussion is similar to Kumaravadivelu's (2003) post-observation. As soon as possible after the observation, the teacher and I selected a few episodes for detailed analysis, interpreted their analysis, derived pedagogic implications and analysed the

teacher/student talk.

The interviews helped to understand RQ1 (regarding the development of practitioner knowledge). In addition, cued response scenarios and stimulated recalls encouraged the teachers' reflection on their beliefs. The one-to-one interviews were followed by a focus group interview in workshops, where what had been discussed with the individual teacher were brought up and shared with other teachers. The main tasks for the five workshops during Phase2 included reflective activities, providing materials, reporting students' attitudes and planning for the next lesson. The interview data also contributed to understand RQ2, regarding how the TD programme helped, and RQ3 regarding contextual factors.

4.7.3 Interviews with students at Phase 2

Students' reactions and attitudes are considered as contextual factors in the adaptation of communicative approaches (RQ3). The interviews were designed to elicit students' perceptions and interpretations of classroom activities from students' perspectives. Each time, three volunteers from each action class were interviewed. The ideal was to have mixed-gender groups; however, it was not often the case.

The interview questions were mainly open-ended questions, which have certain advantages over closed ones (Bryman, 2008). They allow informants to provide extra information which may be beyond the researchers' knowledge and provide various perspectives, while the drawbacks are that they are time-consuming and require the researcher making more efforts to process the data (Robson, 2002).

However, this inductive research aimed to hear the sources and then generate theories from them.

The open ended questions include requiring the students to comment on their teachers' changes, if they perceived any, and to comment on the observed lesson associated with my prompts. Also, recommendations or concerns were invited. These constituted the first four questions for all interviews; the final set of questions was based on scenarios in each observed class. The interview schedule is shown in Appendix 4.4.

Data also include documents from the courses, such as hand-outs, syllabi, textbooks and school examination result records (Grossman, 1989).

4.8 Data collection procedures

The project was carried out in three phases, following the procedures as planned (Table 4.2); see Appendix 4.5 for the time line of data collection procedures. The procedures followed the established steps for conducting AR. In action research cycles, plan, action, observation and reflection are the typical key elements (e.g. Kemmis & McTaggart, 1999; Wallace, 1998; Burns, 1999). Later, many researchers modified these dominant features in more detail; for example, Burns (2002) expand them to eleven steps, Cohen *et al.* (2007) seven, and Robson (2011) eight steps. Integrating their views, the researcher developed twelve steps as a working plan.

Table 4.3 Data collection procedures

Phases		Procedures	Major events
Phase 1	1	Finding an issue to investigate	Compiled the research proposal
	2	Analysing the issue	Met teacher participants
	3	Gathering information for the investigation	Signed consent forms
	4	Planning the way to collect the data about this issue	Distributed Questionnaire 1 Interviewed the teachers
	5	Collecting data about this issue	Observed one class
	6	Analysing the data	Organised the first workshop
	7	Hypothesising or conceptualising and planning the intervention	
Phase 2	8	Intervening or acting	Observed five classes
	9	Observing	Interviewed the teachers
	10	Reporting to other teachers and reflecting	Interviewed the students
	11	Repeating procedures 7-11, if necessary	Organised four workshops
Phase 3	12	Evaluating the intervention and considering future plans and dissemination	Distributed Questionnaire 2 Organised the sixth workshop Presented results in conferences

4.8.1 Phase 1

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the first four steps had been completed before I met the participants. The duration of my interest in this issue, writing up a proposal and revising it took more than for two years, starting before my MSc year and one year after that.

In April 2013, I wrote to John with my research plan and examples of the application of communicative approaches in teaching grammar, for him to recruit volunteer teachers. In August, John arranged a meeting for me and the teacher participants. At the meeting, I talked about the research plan and listened to their

concerns. They did not question about anything and seemed to be happy to offer participation. The teachers decided which class of theirs to use as participants, the dates of distributing the questionnaire with their students, interviews with them, and the first workshop. John also arranged a meeting for me to meet the head teacher.

This study started in September, 2013. The head teacher, the teacher and the student participants and their parents were all informed and signed the consent forms by the end of August 2013. Subsequently, I collected relevant information (from questionnaire and interviews) and analysed them in order to prepare appropriate materials for the teachers. These materials took into consideration potential challenges, such as time constraints and students of mixed abilities. By the end of the first week of September, one-to-one interviews were conducted with each teacher. I observed the teachers' "usual class", i.e. what they normally did in class. The preliminary observations were necessary for me to prepare materials for teachers at their current levels of knowledge of communicative approaches.

Questionnaire 1 was piloted with another class of Wendy's, who were not participants. It was then distributed to all AR classes. I distributed the questionnaire to the students in their classroom personally; this group administered questionnaire may not only ensure a higher response rate but also raise validity. This allows respondents to ask for clarification when they are unclear about the meaning of a question. Classroom settings are relatively easy to conduct group administered questionnaires (Bryman, 2008). My promise to keep the responses anonymous was stated at the top of the questionnaire, and I reassured the students while they were doing the questionnaire. Then the

results were reported to the teachers in the first workshop held in the second week of September 2013.

4.8.2 Phase 2

The objective at the main stage was to adopt the main features of communicative approaches in practice. In this phase, I aimed to work closely with the practitioners to proceed to the cyclical procedures of action, observation, reflection and plan for the next cycles, i.e. Steps 7 to 11 (Table 4.3).

The observation scheme adopted a more process-oriented model, consisting of three-stage activities (similar to Kumaravadivelu's (2003) concept): pre-observation, observation itself, and post-observation. Prior to observation, the observation scheme had been introduced to the teachers, so they knew the objectives. When observing, I noted any incidents interesting or worthy to be explored with the teacher later. I sat in the corner where I could see all the students. The observations were conducted around once a month from September 2013 to January 2014, five observations in total. Subsequently, post-lesson discussions with teachers were followed.

On the same day after the observation, three students from each class were interviewed in a focus group for about 30 minutes in the lunch break. The interview schedule for the students followed Robson's (2002) suggestions. Firstly, I introduced myself and the purposes of the interview, the main of which was to understand their thoughts and opinions for their teachers' reference. Next I acknowledged their teacher's help with my study, followed by reiterating the anonymity in any forms, and the conversations in the interview would not be

referred to their names to their teacher. I asked for their permission to record the discussion, and explained the reason for doing this is merely for my memory. All the students in the 15 interviews agreed. At the end, I expressed my appreciation for their participation.

In workshops, basic tasks were 1) reporting students' feedback, 2) providing teachers with the input knowledge of communicative approaches, 3) post-lesson discussion and reflection. From the second workshop onwards, I reported to the teachers the initial analysis of the observation data and the student interview data. We discussed relevant issues and the teachers were invited to comment on the preliminary analysis. The information gathered helped them to plan for the next cycle. The plans, procedures and details for each workshop are reported in Chapter 5.

4.8.3 Phase 3

At the final stage, i.e. the end of school term (January, 2014), the main task was to evaluate the implementations and the TD programme (Step 12). The evaluation was taken from four angles: teachers' points of view, students' points of view, school exam scores and the researcher's reflections. In the final workshop, the teachers were invited to share how the TD programme helped to achieve the research aim. Questionnaire 2 was distributed to the students to understand their perceptions. I asked Diana for school exam results to identify any potential impacts. Finally, I reflected on the research processes and the effectiveness of the TD programme.

Another objective at this stage was considering future plans and dissemination

of this AR. In the final workshop, one purpose was talking about the teachers' future development. All the data needed had been collected and this enabled the analyses to be taken in an integrative manner. Since April, 2014, I have taken an active role in presenting the findings at conferences for dissemination.

4.9 Data Analysis

This section reports how the data collected by questionnaires, classroom observations and interviews were analysed. The action research took five cycles, and analysis was started immediately the data was collected so that propositions and interpretations gleaned from the data could inform later data collection. As interpretivist research, this study took an inductive approach in analysing data. To deal with different sets of data, three approaches were taken, namely, thematic coding analysis for qualitative data, quantitative analysis and Conversation Analysis (CA) for classroom talks.

4.9.1 Qualitative data

Most of the data are qualitative in this research, which include the responses of open-ended questions from questionnaires, notes and audio recording data (from interviews), and field notes, visual recording data, peer observation sheet and observation-behaviour and strategy sheet. These qualitative data were analysed with thematic coding analysis, which is a generic approach to analysis of qualitative data (Robson, 2011). Rather than previously established, codes and themes are derived from interaction with the data, i.e. a posteriori coding (Holliday, 2002). However, this approach does not preclude using predetermined

codes (Robson, 2011).

The analysis was carried out with a computer software programme, NVivo (version 10). The advantages of qualitative data analysis (QDA) packages include: providing a single location storage system for all stored materials, quick and easy to access; handling large amounts of data rapidly; having a range of ways of displaying results (Robson, 2011: 472). However, it cannot replace the researcher's job of deciding codes and themes.

The data analysis involved five steps: immersing, reflecting, transcribing (interview and classroom talk data), searching for meaning and coding. These steps were iterative, as Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) suggest. Coding the data followed four main steps: identifying codes, determining themes, constructing an argument and going back to the data. I then checked the codes against the raw data, reviewing codes and made possible changes for the codes and themes. During the process, I aimed to avoid cherry picking bits that fit, and to take an unbiased and open-minded stance in developing codes from these data. Codes emerging from a single method were later applied to the whole data set. In reporting an event, I tried to include all perspectives from people involved.

4.9.1.1 Questionnaires

Data from the open-ended questions in both questionnaires were treated as qualitative data. I began with immersing in the raw data—reading and re-reading them, hearing what the data had to say and getting a real feel for those data. Next, I looked for key words— ‘buzz’ words, commonly used words/phrases, metaphors, and any relation to the research questions to begin coding. At the

same time, I annotated with comments and thoughts on my research journal.

The next step was to organise the codes from each category (previously set, e.g. 'Things they like') into small and more manageable groups of subthemes (e.g. 'opportunities to use the language' and then themes (e.g. in favour of communicative approaches). Then, I placed the raw data into NVivo. The processes of reading through the data, searching for meaning, patterns and themes were repeated. During these processes, I kept reflecting on the data, and kept the reflection in my research journal, and developed some arguments. I consistently thought about other possible interpretations which may even contradict my earlier arguments until I was completely convinced myself.

4.9.1.2 Interviews

Similarly procedures were used for all the interview data. Those from one-to-one interviews and post-lesson discussion with the teachers, and focus group interviews with the students are entirely qualitative. The analysis of qualitative data went through the aforementioned five steps. I studied my notes, and listened and re-listened to the audio-recordings to fill in what I had missed onto the notes. Then I reflected on the data, and kept the reflection in my research journal. I transcribed the audio data and explored the transcription. At the same time, I annotated with comments and wrote my thoughts in the research journal.

I placed the transcription and notes into NVivo. I kept reading through it to identify codes until no new codes emerge. The codes emerging from the interviews were applied to other data set such as questionnaire, to take a holistic view. Next, the codes were organised into small and more manageable groups

of subthemes and then themes, which were then used to construct arguments.

4.9.1.3 Observations

Regarding classroom observations data, for this research purpose, pedagogical activities were crudely categorised into teacher talk and pair/group activities (hereby referred to 'activities'). Action research and TD programmes both need a set of criteria to identify improvements. The observation scheme was developed with criteria to serve the purpose for both. It then logically became a coding scheme, as Table 4.4 below shows. These criteria- whether there is a primary focus on meaning, the extent of the interaction and involvement and whether there is a goal to achieve communicatively- served as broad categories, rather than a priori coding. This is because the analyses followed the inductive, bottom-up approach to allow codes and themes to emerge which were allocated to appropriate categories.

For example, if a code, 'putting some constraints on learners' language choice', emerged from observing a teacher's behaviour, it is suitable to subject to the criterion, 'Primary focus on meaning'. This is due to the fact that this code/feature deteriorates the principle of putting meaning as primary.

Table 4.4 Coding scheme for observation data

Criteria	In design	In process
Primary focus on meaning	e.g. teaching vocabulary by starting with examples (+)	e.g. putting some constraints on learners' language choice (-)
Interaction and involvement	e.g. putting students into pair work (+)	e.g. Some were observed completing the work with interacting their groups (+); some were not (-)
Goal	e.g. The goal to achieve is to draw to conform to that information	e.g. In general, the goal was not achieved by students actively interacting in L2, so not a task

Three possible types of data were anticipated, and included in the scheme: teacher talk, the designs of activities and the records of classroom realities in the process. Teacher talk was treated as qualitative data, and analysed with CA (in 4.10.3). Data from field notes, peer observation sheets and observation-behaviour and strategy sheets were qualitative in nature and analysed with the same steps as for the interview data. The data analysis framework for observation data is illustrated in Figure 4.2 below.

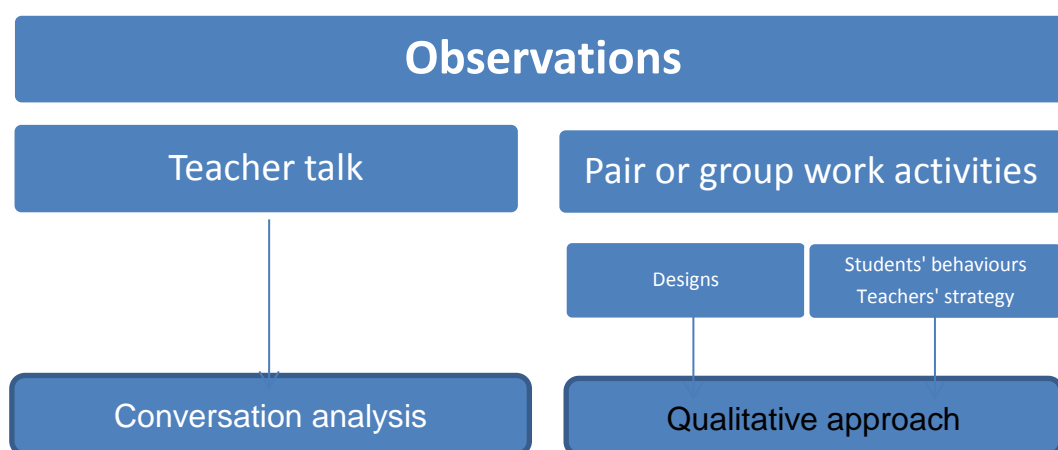


Figure 4.2 Data analysis framework for observation data

In addition, some qualitative data were later treated as quantitative data, for example, the percentage of L1 and L2 use by students.

4.9.2 Quantitative data

In relation to quantitative data, some parts of the two questionnaires were processed and analysed with a computer software package, The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, (SPSS, version 21).

The first questionnaire consists of a 5-point Likert type scale collecting quantitative data. For analysing the data, the first steps were visually inspecting the data for errors, keying in the raw data into the SPSS programme and coding the data, which means assigning numeric values to each response and coding variables. The second step was to reverse items-negatively worded before conducting reliability test and a descriptive analysis (Pallant, 2007). The sum of each item and its average score were computed with SPSS. Finally, the results of the analysis were presented in summary form (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007), according to the previously set codes.

Another set of quantitative data was Question 3 in the second questionnaire, which asked students to self-evaluate how much their English had improved in some areas. They chose from three different levels of improvement, namely, a lot, some and little. I keyed in the students' choices onto SPSS for computing frequency and creating histograms to compare the findings from each class.

4.9.3 Conversation Analysis (CA)

For analysing teacher talk, the talks between teachers and students was videotaped and later transcribed, and analysed with Conversation Analysis (CA). This methodology is used for the analysis of 'naturally-occurring spoken interaction' (Seedhouse, 1995: 165). CA aims to develop an emic perspective by

'tak[ing] account of the interdependency of turns in the social practices at work', and attempts to understand the nature of classroom discourse (Walsh, 2002: 7). It is to explicate 'how a turn and a sequence at talk are developed in a moment by moment fashion, and what kind of resources are utilised as the participants locally manage turn construction and allocation' (Mori, 2002: 326). This conforms to the epistemological stance in this action research. Mori (2002) used this method as theoretical framework to analyse how the turns were developed in a small group activity in order to explore the relationships between task-as-workplan and task-in-process. Walsh (2002) also applied CA to investigate how teachers created opportunities to enhance learner involvement through teacher talk in an EFL classroom.

Taking a sociocultural theory approach to the application of CA to the field of SLA means employing CA as a tool in the service of sociocultural theory (SCT). Although CA is an empirical research methodology while SCT is a learning theory, there still some similarities between them. As Mondada and Pekarek Doehler (2004: 504) point out, 'both of these frameworks converge in insisting on the central role of contextually embedded communicative processes in the accomplishment of human actions and identities as well as of social facts'. This approach is different from the linguistic CA approach where the focus is primary on types of 'interactional organisation', such as turn-taking and adjacency pairs in a decontextualised fashion, and treats data as quantitative (Seedhouse, 2005:167). That is, it neglects social acts which are co-constructed by the interactants. Rather, these interactional organisations should be understood as normative action templates for reference for the interpretation of their actions, as Seedhouse (2005) suggests. They themselves are part of the 'context-free machinery' which people employ in a context-sensitive way. Similarly, analysts

are only able to interpret the context-sensitive social actions of others because there is a context-free machinery by reference to which they can make sense of them (Seedhouse, 2005:167).

Under sociocultural theory perspective to CA, any attempt to understand the L2 classroom discourse should recognise the important relationship between language use and pedagogic purpose. Drawing from his empirical data, Seedhouse (2005) concludes that the relationship between pedagogy and interaction is reflexive. That is, when the pedagogical focus varies, the organisation of the interaction varies. The implication for my research is that teachers' pedagogic purpose should be considered when interpreting their classroom discourse. As Walsh (2002) suggests, appropriate language use is more likely to occur when teachers are sufficiently aware of their goal in the process of a lesson to match their pedagogic purpose. Learning opportunities are facilitated when language use and pedagogic purpose converge.

To analyse with an emic perspective, some principles as Seedhouse (2005: 179) suggests were followed: for example, conducting an emic, holistic analysis of each extract as an instance of discourse in its own right; focusing on perspectives on socially-shared cognition and learning, and on shifts from task-as-plan to task-in-process. The analysed interactional data followed these principles can help to ensure the construct validity of quantitative treatment of interactional feature (e.g. error correction) in the next stage (Seedhouse, 2005).

4.10 Trustworthiness of the research

While validity and reliability are regarded as important criteria in assessing the quality of quantitative research, establishing criteria for examining the quality of

qualitative research are equally essential (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Robson, 2002; Holliday, 2010). Lincoln and Guba (1985) began with four standards for assessing the rigour of research based on a constructivist point of view, namely, credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. The view that trustworthiness is composed of these four primary criteria is widely accepted for qualitative research (Bryman, 2008). Integrating criteria proposing by a variety of scholars, a set of principles to assess the quality of qualitative research was established to guide and assess this AR study. This section firstly discusses important criteria in assessing the quality of qualitative research, followed by an evaluation of how this study addressed these criteria for trustworthiness and the limitations.

4.10.1 Principles for credibility

Credibility, paralleling internal validity, refers to the extent to which a piece of research actually investigates what the researcher purports to investigate (Nunan, 1992). One technique to establish the credibility is triangulation, and another is respondent/member validation (Bryman, 2008). A more positivist view of triangulation is to obtain evidence from multiple methods and use it to build a coherent justification for conclusions (Creswell, 2008). This differs from the current study's intention which was to listen to the interpretation from multiple sources, and to draw conclusions from interpreting multiple perspectives which were acquired from multiple data collection methods (Burns, 1999, 2010). In essence, the purpose of triangulation in this study is to gain richer insights and less subjective pictures than relying on a single data collection method (Burns, 1999).

Another principle applied was member checking for credibility. Member checking (Robson, 2011), member validation (Bryman, 2008), or member-checks (Burns, 1999) are often used to mean the same thing, which enhances credibility. For the member validation, analysed reports were taken back to the participants for them to comment on. It is also viewed as a valuable means to guard against researcher bias (Robson, 2011). Seeking corroboration of the research findings from the informants and feeding back to them are also parts of researchers' responsibilities (Bryman, 2008).

The transcriptions of teacher talk and interviews with the students, and classroom observation data were often reported to the teachers; I was prepared for any disagreement to occur (Robson, 2011). My interpretations of the teachers' attitudes towards attempting communicative approaches were often shared with my critical friend in this AR, John. Their recognitions and supports of the data analysis and interpretations provide more confidence for the credibility of this study (Robson, 2011).

In addition, audio- or video-taping is also a strategy which this study followed, for increasing credibility. As Robson (2002; 2011) points out, the threats to credibility include inaccuracy and incompleteness of data. The fourth principle applied for credibility was long-term involvement. Spending prolonged time in the field can help reduce reactivity (changes produced by the process of measurement itself) and respondent bias (Robson, 2002). Additionally, the more time is involved in the phenomena and settings, the more understanding is attained and the more accurate or valid the findings will be (Gibbs, 2007). In this study, the intensive, long-term involvement allowed repeated observations and interviews and helped to generate a more detailed and holistic picture. It also helps to rule out spurious

associations and premature theories (Stake, 2005). Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that prolonged engagement with persistent observation also leads to more credible reliability. However, researchers should take caution for any researcher bias that may increase at the same time (Robson, 2011).

Therefore, it can be envisaged that AR's iterative and cyclical features could enhance trustworthiness. As Burns (1999) argues, new insights continually raise and inform new but related questions, while in turn the process of collecting data develops further the results of data collection in previous research cycles. The iterative aspect becomes particularly powerful when research is conducted collaboratively, as finding and outcomes can be cross-checked among the members (Burns, 2011).

4.10.2 Using rich, thick description for dependability

Dependability parallels external reliability, concerned with replicability, which is emphasised in quantitative research (Wellington 2000). Many contend that it cannot be applied to interpretive field of studies with an idiographic nature. Rather than examining the extent to which a study can be replicated, some (e.g. Densombe, 2008) suggest transparency of methods should be provided, i.e. systematic and consistent approach to the categorisation and indexing the data set. Using rich, thick description is hence suggested by Gibbs (2007). This includes detailed description of the settings or multiple perspectives about a theme, as well as perspectives running counter to the themes. This study presented multiple voices from the participants, and revealed relevant information as detailed as possible. This enables readers to determine how closely their situations match the research situation (Merriam, 1995).

4.10.3 Peer examination and audit trail for internal reliability

Internal reliability considers the consistency of a measurement instrument. For internal reliability of the instrument to measure attitudes in Questionnaire 1, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was adopted, as it is one of the commonly used indicators of internal consistency (Pallant, 2007; Oppenheim, 1992). All items in the attitude scale were put into this reliability check after the negative items were reversed. The Alpha coefficient is 0.72 which is within an acceptable range (Pallant, 2007).

Reliability in interpretive research relates to the consistency of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Nunan, 1992). It is believed that collaborative action research can enhance reliability in its own right (Burns, 1999; Nunan, 1992). In addition, a strategy to ensure greater consistency is peer examination, that is, to show the peer how researchers collect data, how they derive categories, and how they make decisions throughout the inquiry (Merriam, 1995). This ensures that the researchers are interpreting the data in plausible ways. This is similar to member checking but the main difference is that the peer may not participate in the study (Burns, 1999).

Another strategy is use of an audit trail; I, as the researcher, kept a full record of my raw data, including questionnaire sheets, transcripts and field notes, my research journal and details of my data analysis (Robson, 2011).

4.10.4 Clarification of researchers' bias and being reflective for confirmability

Confirmability parallels objectivity; however, it is impossible to avoid personal

value intertwining with the research process (Densombe, 2008). Therefore, the trustworthiness of the research depends on how the subjectivity is managed (Holliday, 2010). Holliday (2010) provides three principles: transparency, submission and making appropriate claims. The transparency principle requires the researcher to provide a detailed description of how data is collected, analysed, and how the researcher's beliefs influence these processes. To clarify researchers' bias, researchers should first question their assumptions, values and motivations (Wellington, 2000), and make comments about how their interpretation of findings is shaped by their background (Gibbs, 2007). Burns (1999) suggests researchers keep reflexive diaries or journals to display the thinking processes of these. I believe I followed this principle.

Secondly, researchers should submit to the unexpected data emerging, even when they may change the direction of the study (Holiday, 2010). A way to do so is for the researcher to put aside professional preoccupation, which means trying to observe from a stranger's point of view. Another way is through a holistic thematic analysis and attending to details (Holliday, 2010). When reporting, it also helps to make it clear which are the interpretations from the informants and which are the researcher's interpretations and arguments (Holliday, 2002).

The third principle suggests researchers make claims only when they have sufficient evidence to say something to be the case, not to prove anything. This was what the study pursued (Holliday, 2010). This also suggests the researcher should often reflect and consider whether there are other possible interpretations. This aspect somewhat overlaps with Robson's (2011) suggestion of providing a valid interpretation for credibility; the researcher continually charted and justified the steps through the interpretations were made.

4.10.5 Transferability

The fourth criterion for trustworthiness is transferability. Transferability parallels external validity, which refers to the extent to which the findings of a study can be generalised to other situations and to other people. There have been keen debates regarding whether the findings of qualitative research, usually with small samples, can be generalised (Cresswell, 2007). For interpretative research, transferability is an alternative to external validity, referring to the extent to which the findings from a small sample in a particular context can be generalised to another context (Bryman, 2008). The extent of transferability depends on how similar the case is to other of its type (Denscombe, 2008). As Pring (2000) points out, even the extreme unique case in ethnographic studies can be applied to other social groups due to the fact that human beings are not unique in every aspect; they share some common features. Researchers need to provide rich, thick description for readers to judge the similarities or disparities between the research and their own contexts (Denscombe, 2008).

The findings in this study are envisaged to be applicable to other Taiwanese school contexts. Due to the Taiwanese unique class arrangement scheme, the convenience sample selection may match some features of random sampling, the advantage of which is to provide a representative sample (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001). Secondary schools in Taiwan have to follow a standard scheme for class arrangement, which aims to mix students' aptitude abilities in each class. This is arranged intentionally according to the results of the placement test which they have taken before students begin school. Hence, the sampling in such school environment may help to reduce the effects of the intelligence factor, which according to Lightbown (2000), is the most influential factor to L2 learning.

Having said that, this research is open to be critiqued and verified.

It is envisaged that the findings can also be applicable to other school contexts worldwide. The relevance of this Taiwanese study to the rest of the world is, for one thing, that the implementation of communicative approaches seems problematic worldwide (Littlewood, 2007); for another, practical questions, issues, daily concerns addressed in this study are likely to be broadly recognisable across many educational settings. Problems such as group work, balance between grammar instruction and communicative activities, strategies developed by the teachers, suggestions made for the teachers in this study could provide reference for teachers in other countries to reflect on.

To summarise with the strengths and weakness of this study, the strengths include applying multiple methods and perspectives, providing detailed descriptions of the data; and the trustworthiness enhanced by the nature of collaborative AR itself. On the other hand, the fact that this was a study conducted by a single doctoral student could bring some limitations to the study, as discussed in the following section.

4.10.6 Limitations of this study

Limitations related to observations include criticism relating to validity. Observations rely more exclusively on the researcher's own perceptions, and thus are more vulnerable to bias from the subjective interpretation of situations (Alder & Alder, 1998). However, this can be compensated by the use of participants' quotes to enrich and confirm the researcher's analysis (Creswell, 2008), as is the case in this study. In addition, Alder and Alder (1998) suggest

employing multiple observers. They can cross check each other's interpretations, and thus enhance the validity of observations. The teachers were encouraged to observe each other to promote their professional growth as well as to increase the validity of this study. However, a problem which arose from the observation was that the students' voices were often incomprehensible to me, the observer, especially when they sat facing the front. I remained at the back of the classroom in order to maintain a position of non-intervention in the class, and the teachers were not requested to approach the learners to get a clearer view. This is a dilemma caused by avoiding the observer effects, another criticism regarding observations. I followed two main strategies to minimize this effect: 'minimal interaction with the group and habituation of the group to the observer's presence', suggested by Robson (2011: 337). One suggestion may be to equip the room with more cameras on the walls from different angles, which was difficult by myself.

In addition, internal reliability can be increased by having another/multiple coders to compare the categories (Nunan, 1992) for either observation or interview data. However, no other coder is another drawback in this study. Finally, the next section addresses ethical considerations and related issues.

4.11 Ethical considerations and related issues

Social researchers are responsible not only for pursuing knowledge, but also for the participants of their research. BERA (2011) provides guidelines for researchers' responsibilities to the participants, including voluntary informed consent, participants' right and privacy. I give details regarding the ethical issues of informed consent, etc. in the Certificate of ethical research approval (Appendix

1.1). All the participants were informed of the research aims, methods, other potential impact on them and their rights. Written consents were obtained from all the participants (Appendix 1.2), and all recordings were made only with participants' permission. To protect participants' privacy, anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed. Other ethical norms followed regarding respect, confidentiality, and safe guarding were carefully considered (Holliday, 2010).

Due to action research's dynamic and shifting nature, ethical orientation is fundamental to the reflective and democratic spirit of action research (Burns, 2010). Apart from these guidelines, there are more moral principles to consider above and beyond the simple right such as privacy. For one thing, Creswell (2007) contends that reciprocity is another ethic. Although the teachers' participation in this programme meant an extra workload, long-term involvement could expose them to more opportunities to reflect on their practice and thus stimulate their growth. I motivated myself not only to be a researcher but also a consultant, mentor, peer and their assistant, and tried providing material and moral support as much as possible.

Following the ethical guide, I envisaged other potential impacts on the participants and their rights. For example, this study may affect those involved students' school exams; thus if there were any negative changes in the students' test achievement, I would take necessary actions to avoid this. For example, I would discuss this with the teachers and make decisions with them.

Giving consideration to ethical issues could cause limitations to this study. This would be a rare case that a student researcher tried to "tell" qualified teachers how to teach and "comment" on their lessons. Taiwanese public school teachers have a comparatively high social status, thus it was important to avoid giving the

negative impression that I was criticising their teaching methods. In order to avoid this situation, I needed to be very careful in my use of language and the questions I asked. For example, during my research, I avoided asking whether the teachers had read the materials which I had provided. Since I had to refrain from directly pointing out areas of professional practice which I felt could be improved, this may have reduced the effectiveness of the teacher educational programme and this study. Another possible limitation was that this programme would not be obligatory or provide any academic accreditation e.g. by rewarding participants with a certificate. This may have reduced the motivation of the participants to take part in the study.

Chapter 5 Results

This chapter presents the findings in the order of the three stages of this study: the preparation stage, the main stage and the evaluation stage. Section 5.1 presents the data collected in the preparation stage. Sections 5.2 to 5.6 illustrate each teacher's development during each cycle of the main stage. Section 5.7 summarizes the student interview data, reports the findings of the second questionnaire, and presents the school examination results, as both are considered as contextual factors.

5.1 Teacher and student information collected in the preparation stage

This section reports the background of the participants, the students' views; the teachers' self-stated personal theories regarding L2 teaching and learning, and perceived problems in the implementation of the approaches. These will be followed by the results of observing the teachers' usual approaches to lessons. This section ends with the presentation of what happened in the first workshop.

5.1.1 Participants

This study involved three teacher participants and one class of their students. This section firstly introduces the teachers, the data collected from interviews, followed by the illustration of the students' background information, collected from the first questionnaire. Pseudonyms are used throughout this thesis.

5.1.1.1 Teacher participants

Diana, Wendy and Ken all acquired a BA degree in a Taiwanese Normal

University, in which four-year pre-service teacher training courses were provided (Table 5.1). Ken holds a first degree in English, and Diana and Wendy hold a degree in Education. All of them, aged from 33 to 38, are very experienced English teachers, their years of teaching ranging from ten to fourteen years.

Diana and Wendy were both a class teacher, teaching 14 classes a week. Ken was not a class teacher, and thus has more classes (20) in a week. Diana and Ken were also consultants for the MOE Teaching and Curriculum Advisory Team in Xinzhu city. In this role they helped organise the compulsory fortnightly seminars for the English teachers in the city and advised these teachers for ongoing professional development.

Table 5.1 Background information of the teacher participants

	Gender	Years of teaching	Degree	Role in school
Diana	female	14	BA, MA in Education in a Taiwanese Normal University	Home room teacher/ MOE Advisory Team
Wendy	female	12	BA in Education and English in a Taiwanese Normal University/diploma in postgraduate study in Linguistics in UK	Home room teacher
Ken	male	10	BA in English in a Taiwanese Normal University/MA in media design in USA	MOE Advisory Team

Wendy and Ken received courses related to CLT at university, and Wendy also received CLT courses in the summer postgraduate study. The courses, according to Ken and Wendy, were of a fairly generic nature, and theoretical but

inadequate in preparing future teachers with what they need to know for the job. Wendy commented that communicative approaches were the focus in the summer programme, but was rarely related to practice. Therefore, for her, 'it is only a theory'.

Another important character is John, a non-participant consultant in this TD programme and a critical friend in this AR, as introduced in Section 4.3.

5.1.1.2 Student participants

The year 8 students' basic background was presented in 4.3, here the focus is the age when they started learning English. The results range from one to ten years old. For a student who started learning English at age seven, by the time of the data collection he/she had learnt it for seven or eight years. As the data in Table 5.2 show, only nine students (10%) started learning English after the age of seven, while 90% started before. This means that the majority of the student participants had been learning English for at least seven years. The background information of the student participants is summarised in Table 5.2 below. Based on the educational systems in Taiwan, students are randomly allocated in each class.

Table 5.2 Age when students started learning English

Class Starting age	Diana	Wendy	Ken	Total
older than seven	1	3	5	9 (10%)
at seven	11	4	7	22 (24%)
younger than seven	18	23	18	59 (66%)
Total/class	30	30	30	90

5.1.2 Students' attitudes towards L2 teaching and learning

The first questionnaire set out to understand RQ3: 'In what ways do contextual factors influence the adaption of communicative approaches?'. After I read through the data and examined it for missing data, I put all the data from 90 valid copies (100% return rate) into the SPSS software.

5.1.2.1 Students' attitudes towards their English learning

Part 1 investigates students attitudes towards teacher talk and the activities designed with a 5-point Likert type scale. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient is .72. The responses for each item and the mean scores for each item were computed (see Table 5.3 in Appendix 5.1). A higher score suggests better attitudes toward communicative approaches.

Apart from the three negative items (4th , 7th , 10th) and item 8, the results show the mean scores of all the items are scored higher than the median number, i.e. 3, meaning 'no opinions', indicating that participants show positive attitudes towards communicative approaches.

The students' positive attitudes are also shown from another angle. The combination of Answer 'a' and 'b' (showing positive) and that of answers 'd' and 'e' (negative) are also shown in the table. What is striking is the high score on item 9 (71%; 64 positive responses); tasks that embody communicative purpose are the essence of communicative approaches. It is found that more than half of the students responded positively in 9 items out of 12, meaning that communicative approaches are favoured.

The students also made it clear that they wanted to talk and wanted to be corrected (items 1 & 3). In contrast, students were much more ambivalent concerning explicit grammar instruction (item 8), with 31 (34%) students indicating they dislike this occupying too much class time but 24 (27%) being in favour of it. Given the option of communicative activities or grammar drills (item 11), a majority (49, 54%) chose the former, as opposed to 12 (13%) opting for the grammar drills. Together, the results from Part 1 show that these students hold very positive attitudes towards communicative approaches.

5.1.2.2 Students' preferences and problems

Part 2 contained two open-ended questions: 'Please describe your opinions towards things you like and dislike and problems you have encountered so far in your English class in high school', and 'Please describe them in detail'.

In the analysis of the students' responses to 'things they like', 31 codes emerge. The 31 codes can be categorised into groups, as summarised in Table 5.4 below (see Appendix 5.2 for complete data).

Where I did not fully understand the respondents' intentions, I coded these as 'other items'. For example, 'answer questions' could refer to display or referential questions. It also applies the respondent's intention from 'watch videos', or "practise English"; he/she may focus on form or on the usage while doing these activities.

Table 5.4 Things students like to do in English class

* Only listing the three highest frequency codes Tot= 31 codes

sub-themes	codes	responses
Opportunities to use the language 8 codes	free talk in English role play interact with the teacher	8 6 5 / 24
Group/pair work 7 codes	group discussion group activity games	9 5 4 / 24
Listen to their teacher's English 3 codes	listen to stories from the teacher listen to the teacher talking their life experience listen to the teacher speaking in English	5 2 1 / 8
Learning/practising forms 5 codes	learn vocabulary memorise vocabulary read aloud in English	2 2 1 / 7
Other items 8 codes	watch videos answer questions enjoy easy lessons	3 2 1 / 10

The majority of responses are involved with opportunities to use the language and group/pair work, with 24 responses respectively. These five sub-themes can be further organised into three themes: 'in favour of communicative activities', 'in favour of form-focused (FonFs) instruction' and 'neutral/unsure (towards preference)', according to the convention of these two approaches, as Table 5.5 below shows. 'Listen to their teacher's English' is put in the third theme, neutral/unsure, since the respondents' intentions are unknown to me. Of the responses, 48 responses show a preference for communicative activities, while 7 do so for focus-on-form instruction.

Table 5.5 The results of students' preference-1

() shows numbers of responses

Theme	In favour of communicative activities	in favour of FonFs	neutral/unsure
Sub-Theme	Opportunities to use the language/24 Group/pair work/24	learning/practising forms/7	Listen to their teacher's English/8 Other items/10

In relation to things they dislike, 19 codes emerge from the data, which are grouped in sub-themes, as summarised in Table 5.6 below (see Appendix 5.2 for complete data). Particularly disliked was 'listening to grammar instruction' (12 responses).

Table 5.6 Things students dislike to do in English class

sub-themes Total = 19 codes	codes	responses/total
Learning/practising forms/ Total = 11 codes	listen to grammar instruction	12
	read aloud English	4
	memorise vocabulary	3/Total= 30
Requirement to write individually/5	tests	6
	do homework	5
	take notes	3/16
Presentation/2	presentation/ present a speech	5
	self-introduction to class	1/6
Answering questions/1	answer questions	6/6

Similarly, these four sub-themes can be further organised into two themes, as shown in Table 5.7 below. No codes or subthemes are believed to be related to communicative approaches, while 46 (30+16) responses are subject to the theme of 'dislike FonFs.

Table 5.7_The results of students' preference-2

theme	Dislike FonFs	Neutral/unsure
Sub-theme	learning/practising forms/30 requirement to write individually/16	Presentation/6 answering questions/6

With regard to the problems they have encountered, 12 codes emerge and can be put in five themes, as summarised in Table 5.8 below.

Table 5.8 Problems encountered by the students

Themes	Codes (Total=12 codes)	Responses/total
Grammar	(learn) grammar	17
	memorise grammar rules	1
	grammar practice	1/19
Writing	tests	4
	write sentences	1
	write composition	1/6
Reading	unable to read	2
	read articles	1/3
Speaking	presentation/ present a speech	1
	answer questions in English	2/3
Vocabulary	memorise vocabulary	1
	insufficient knowledge of vocabulary	1/2

It is clear from the data that the main themes the students dislike or have problems with are related more to grammar (with as many as 19 responses) and writing (especially referring to tests).

For the final question, some respondents gave a description regarding these experiences. Regarding grammar, only one student reported believing that grammar instruction could help in learning English. Meanwhile, twelve students showed their negative feelings towards it. One student commented: 'Learning grammar is boring in nature. I cannot stand it when the teacher keeps teaching grammar all the time.' Some noted that 'grammar rules are very difficult to be understood'.

Another emergent theme related to group discussion. Students reported liking these and finding them interesting. One said 'we can share ideas' through group work, while another reported it 'can reduce pressure'. Another contrasted this mode of learning with presentations to the whole class, which made her "feel

nervous”. Wendy’s student noted: ‘We will make more efforts in group discussion than individual work, especially when having a competition with other groups’. Here again the students showed their preference for group discussion. In addition, the students from these three classes make different suggestions; for example:

I hope only English is allowed in class (Ken’s).

If the lesson is integrated with games, I will learn it easier and feel relaxed (Wendy’s)

This reveals again that the students’ main concern is grammar and their preference towards group work, especially discussion. This leads to the conclusion that all the parts of the questionnaire appear to present consistent results. The majority of the students from the three classes are in favour of communicative activities; they show more likes and no dislikes in activities related to communicative approaches.

5.1.3 Teachers’ stated beliefs and knowledge of communicative approaches

Commencing from the first week of September 2013, the first interviews were conducted with the three teachers individually. The purpose of the interviews was to understand their stated beliefs and knowledge of communicative approaches.

In answering the most important aspect of English as a subject for junior high school students to learn, Diana responded:

The knowledge that they can use, communication ability, and the knowledge they can apply

in real life.

Wendy's statement was:

Get them interested in English, and acquire basic communication ability and grammar concepts.

Ken gave a concise comment:

The four skills, and the integration of the four skills.

The female teachers believe that what is important for their students to learn is very much in line with communicative approaches since they both mentioned communication abilities. Ken's response may imply a neutral stance; he did not value particularly any of the four skills. His highlight of the four skills is compatible with communicative approaches, especially for a task, which has the potential to involve all the four skills (Ellis, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 2006a).

Next, those teachers were asked whether they have used CLT or TBLT in their teaching. In Diana's word:

I know there are no consistent methods to carry out CLT, but I consider how students can apply these activities to their real life. As for TBLT, I have run TBLT for designing a project for the competition [with other high schools in the same city], and the theme was 'throwing a party' last year.

Wendy commented:

Actually, now textbooks are pretty much communicative based; so when I teach the dialogue, I try to do my best to encourage students to directly apply the sentences in the textbook to their personal situations and create their own dialogues; yes, in class, I always encourage groups to discuss, using as much English as possible.

Ken's statement was:

I seldom use TBLT; regarding CLT, there are dialogues between students and the teacher or students and students [in my class].

Diana's response exposed that she was not clear about what TBLT means because what she described was not TBLT. Ken identified interaction which relates well to communicative approaches, and Wendy's description of her practice obviously matched the features.

They were also asked about any problems they experienced when implementing CLT in their classrooms. Wendy and Ken asserted that the problems originated from the students. Wendy pointed out that the problems included students using L1, being silent, passive, and being passive was the biggest problem. Ken has a longer list about factors from learners, which include: students don't speak up, students can't answer, students can't read, students can't understand their teachers, and their levels are low; all the problems related to slow learners. Diana highlighted the factor of time. She commented, 'if there is no pressure from time, we can use as many tasks as we like'.

However, I was still holding an attitude of doubt due to past studies which often show that teachers may believe they used communicative approaches, but in practice this may not be the case. Their stated practitioner knowledge which presented here should be compared with observations of their actual practice, which are presented in the section below.

5.1.4 Preliminary-observations of the teachers' practice

Later the same day when I interviewed Ken and Wendy, I observed their classes in the afternoon. I named it 'preliminary observations' to mean the observations

of their “usual lesson” before the first workshop (or cycle) in this AR. I had told the teacher that the observation aimed to understand their normal teaching, and I asked them to teach the ways as they usually did.

5.1.4.1 Description of observations

The classrooms at this school were spacious. The ceilings were high with several large hanging fans. On hot days, running these fans made noises. Teachers usually used a speaker to allow themselves to be heard. Other teachers’ voices were audible from next door when they also used a speaker. Each classroom was equipped with a projector and a large screen.

Ken’s Lesson

Ken’s plan was to show the students how to introduce themselves. Firstly, students were given handouts with a set of questions about self; for examples, Where are you from?, How many people are there in your family?. There was a pattern of fixed sequences: the teacher explained the questions in L1 and the corresponding answers, and then asked the students to repeat after him; he left sufficient time for the students to fill in their own answers. These procedures appeared to be non-communicative learning.

Then the next procedure was to nominate a student to answer each question. Ken rarely commented on the student’s answers, not even with some common used phrases, such as ‘OK’, ‘good’. However, when he heard a student’ answer which may be new to the rest of class, he would write the student’s contribution on the board for them to learn.

Analysis of the teacher talk with the developed observation framework showed that no instructions or comments were given in the target language, nor was pair work or group work assigned. The talks between the teacher and students were virtually discrete questions and answers, with a lack of successive exchanges. There was little focus on meaning, either in the plan or in the process. The analysis revealed that Ken's practice did not match the claim that he used CLT, and that there were interactions between students, and between the teacher and students in his class.

Wendy's lesson

After Wendy announced class affairs, the class moved their desks and chairs from rows to six blocks, with five students in each group. The students all sat facing the front. In the upper right corner of the blackboard, there was a score board, where Wendy kept score for groups.

On the worksheets which Wendy distributed were sets of questions. Questions in Part 1 required the students to answer according to the pictures. Wendy asked individual students to answer those questions. She seemed satisfied when the student could provide one answer to each question, since she did not invite any other different answers. Part 2 was comprehension questions with standard answers, and Wendy asked students to report the answers by group. Later, the class did "role play" for the dialogue in the text book. (The textbook has two main texts in each lesson; one is the dialogue, and the other is the reading). They had two minutes to design actions to match the dialogue. The students were very excited, but no communication in L2 was observed; they seemed to follow the

group leader. Then two groups at a time read out aloud the dialogue with actions. The class finished with highlighting the grammatical rules of the past tense.

Using the criteria in the observation framework, limited learning opportunities were found either in her teacher talking time, or in group work. My observation was that there was little consistency between classroom practice and claims in the interview. The questions were nearly all display questions, and the students' responses followed closely the textbook's content. Although some activities, such as 'role play', were interesting to her students, there were few co-constructed meanings and interactions in L2.

Diana's class

The lesson basically followed the activities in the textbook. Diana asked the students to repeat after her when she read the dialogue, vocabulary on the list, and later the reading. Then she asked some questions related to the content of the reading. Next, the students listened to the CD and then answered the comprehension questions on the worksheet. Finally, Diana checked their answers by asking volunteers to read them out. After that, she reiterated the key grammar points. Each activity lasted for five to ten minutes and she switched between them smoothly and gracefully.

The analysis of Diana's class leads to the conclusion that as in Wendy's lesson, the questions asked in this lesson were mainly display ones, and she seldom related these topics to the students' own experience, e.g. by asking them personalised questions. She seldom built on learners' contributions, and followed closely the textbook's content. Even so, many students volunteered to

answer her questions, and answering in Chinese was allowed.

5.1.4.2 Common features in the teacher talk

In these preliminary observations, although no teachers taught grammar explicitly or gave long one-direction lectures, and all the teachers asked questions, these cannot hide the clear lack of communicativeness in their class. Some common features can be found in the teachers' teacher talk.

Using the first criterion in the observation framework, primary focus on meaning, one main feature was that few meanings were actually exchanged. For one thing, two female teachers' questions were mainly display questions. Asking display questions (which the teachers know the answers) is not different from form-focused practice (Thornbury 1996). For another, their teacher talk was a very regular pattern of a teacher's question followed by a single student's answer and back to the teacher's initiative (T→ S. T→ S. T→ S...). In addition, the questions were not successive but discrete. This makes the class more similar to practising the sentence structures, rather than putting meaning as primary. The type of question deterred the extent of learners' participation in interaction, i.e. the second criterion. In turn, the low level of interaction reduces the co-constructed meaning (Johnson, 1995).

Another salient common feature is the lack of the teachers' F-moves (feedback in the sequence of Teacher Initiation, Learner Response, and Teacher Feedback, IRF structure). They employed little feedback to encourage students' talk, and seldom built on learners' contribution and invite further. Morri (2002: 331) clearly concludes four modes of the follow-up moves (3rd Position) after each question

and answer, as illustrated below.

1st pair part A: (question)
 2nd pair part B: (answer)
 3rd position part A or B:

The 3rd Position is often:

- the questioner's (A) acknowledgement or evaluation of the answer
- the subsequent question to the original one by B
- B's returning or asking the same or similar question
- B's telling or question on a shifted focus

The feature of talk in all the teachers' class was the exchange of question and answer without the third position part. The teachers failed to utilise the F-move to elicit more students' turns and create more learning opportunities. These features of their teacher talk are summarised in Table 5.9 below:

Table 5.9 Features of the teacher talk in preliminary observations

(+) refers to the feature which contributes to the communicativeness of class

(-) refers to the feature which decreases the communicativeness of class

	In the process
Primary focus on meaning	Few meanings exchanged (-) Low coherent level of questions (-) Tended to practising the sentence structures (-) Mainly asked display questions (-) (Wendy, Diana)
Interaction and involvement	Mainly teacher initiative (-) No or little feedback to encourage students' talks (-) Seldom built on learners' contribution and invite further (-) Respected students' answers (+) (Ken)

The general impression for their practice was that there was limited communication; however, some characteristics of the teaching were found to

have potential to implement the approaches, and one's specialty was another's area which could be improved. For example, Wendy manages group work well, whereas Ken and Diana did not apply it in class; while Wendy's and Diana's questions were confined to the content of the textbook, Ken showed his flexibility in asking more personalised questions and accepting different answers; whilst more of Diana's students volunteered to answer her questions, Ken's students appeared reluctant to answer. Thus, the three teachers could gain significantly by observing each other's class.

5.1.5 Workshop 1

With the information collected for understanding the teachers' and their students' perceptions towards communicative approaches, and the teachers' practice and beliefs, I reviewed my plan for the first workshop. I added 'Explaining im/explicit teaching and learning and their relationship with communicative approaches'. This was inspired by the discussion with John. When I pointed out that none of those teachers' practice was in line with these approaches, John asked me the reasons for such a conclusion. I explained and also drew on theories, such as 'internal syllabus' to stress that explicit teaching does not necessarily lead to L2 acquisition, which also provides a rationale to employ communicative approaches.

The plan was also adjusted due to the business of the teachers. The ideal time slots for workshops are at least one and half hours, and better to be two hours. Diana volunteered to set up times for the workshops. I learnt that it is not easy to put all the three teachers together for the workshops, due to their busy schedules. To make things worse, something unexpected happened to deter

their full attendance. On the date of Workshop 1, every teacher was late, and thus, we started by 15 minutes late. Then Wendy told me that she would need to leave early. I made the decision immediately as to how the rest of 75 minutes (or 45 minutes, for Wendy) could be spent by adjusting the original plan of 90 minutes, as shown in Appendix 5.3

I selected a reflective model, the results of the questionnaire and the definition of communicative approaches, CLT and TBLT, and I knew that I needed to do it very quickly. I made the decision to spend most of the time on Littlewood's category with his examples of activities. I chose it as a focus because the teachers were about to implement the approaches. I was disappointed when we did not have time to cover im/explicit teaching and learning, which was added after I observed their "normal" class. Making lesson plans is one of the main goals in workshops, but I had to leave it to the teachers. Before Wendy and Ken left, they suggested meeting again for the unfinished parts, and they decided to meet the next day.

The next day I further explained very quickly some aspects which I believed important for them to know. The aspects included the four communicative competences, the reflective models and meanings of communicative approaches. I invited them to share what they had in mind. Wendy started, 'will we have theories in every workshop?' Wendy continued that she knew these theories well, contrary to what she had told me in the interview that she only had a vague impression about the approaches; this reminded me that she did mention she was only interested in useful, practical examples.

In the two-day workshop, Diana and John stayed to have further discussion with me. It is obviously that too much input needed to be provided in such short time

slots. Later Diana showed me their worksheet (worked with Wendy), showing evidence that they tried to integrate the concept of 'gap' in activities. I pointed out that the activities were still form-focused and I made clear how to change them to more meaning/task based.

The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 1 is summarised in Table 5.10 below:

Table 5.10 The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop

Achieved: ✓ Not/hardly achieved: X Partly achieved: Δ

No	Objective in Workshop 1	
1	To understand and help teachers to understand their beliefs	X
2	To report students' questionnaire data	✓
3	To answer the following questions: What are communicative approaches?	✓
	In what way can it benefit students' language learning?	Δ
	How do I implement communicative approaches?	✓
	Is it possible for me to implement communicative approaches in my class?	Δ
	Show me examples of communicative activities	✓
4	To make plans for the first lesson	X

As mentioned in Section 3.4.6.1, four main goals in the workshops included: (1) to provide the teachers with knowledge about the approaches, (2) to explore their beliefs through reflective activities, and stimulated recall or cued response scenarios (3) to inform them about students' attitudes and perceptions about the teaching, and (4) finally to use all the information in designing lesson plans. As can be seen in the above table, the first objective (corresponding to Goal 2), 'To understand and help teachers to understand their beliefs' was hardly achieved. The reflective activities were omitted. For example, the plan was to ask them to reflect: How do we facilitate students with this knowledge? when I

introduced discourse competence. The last item, 'To make plans for the next lesson' (correspond to Goal 4), was not achieved in this workshop, either. Admittedly, the rest of goals were at best "covered" rather than "achieved", due to the time constraints.

The first cycle started from the first workshop, followed by the first observations. The next main sections (5.2 to 5.6) present the data collected in the main stage of this AR, which took place from September 2013 to January 2014. It is structured according to the order in which the lessons were observed. I presented descriptions of class activities along with transcriptions or with the observation-behaviour and strategy sheets. I highlighted the features of these activities, and evaluate them according to the observation framework. This was interwoven with the teachers' reflections and with the views of their students and colleagues, and concludes with my comments and a reflection on the influence these activities had upon their peers. Each section ended with a description of what happened in the workshop and with my reflection on the cycles.

5.2 The teachers' practitioner knowledge development in the first research cycle

The first observations took place from 23rd to 25th of September, 2013, starting with Diana, then Wendy and finally Ken. Data are coded as follows: Observation 1 is coded as O1, Observation 2 coded as O2, and so forth. I asked the teachers to fill in peer observation sheets: the first observation by Ken is coded as PeerKen1, and so forth.

5.2.1 Diana

In this lesson, Ken joined me as an observer. The students sat in three main sections, in the shape of long rectangles. All the students faced towards the blackboard. Later in the post-observation interview, I learnt from Diana that each section consisted of two groups; one was in the front, and the other was in the back. In this lesson, Diana demonstrated her improvements in the teacher talk and conducted her first group work activities.

5.2.1.1 The features of Diana's teacher talk

Diana started the class by asking her students about their recent holiday, referred to as Activity 1, as the extract shown below, and the next activity introduced the reading, Activity 2 (refer to Appendix 5.4 for the transcription and the transcription system).

Extract 1: Activity 1: Greeting/ warm-up

The italics show non-linguistic behaviours or Chinese was spoken, and in the parentheses explains the utterance of Chinese.

1 T: How about your Mid-Autumn Festival? How was your Mid-Autumn Festival?

2 Ss: Terrible.

3 T: Why? Why was you Mid-Autumn Festival terrible, S1?

4 S1: Because it was very very very very boring. *T approaches to the student*

5 T: Because it was very very very very boring. Did you have a BBQ?

6 Ss: No

7 T: Why not?

8 S: Because of Typhoon *Some answered in Chinese*

9 T: Because of Typhoon. Because Typhoon is coming. Were you here in XinZhu, S2?

10 S2: yes

11 T: So you can't have a BBQ. *Chinese*. Who else wants to share his Mid-Autumn Festival with us? How was your Mid-Autumn Festival? How was your Mid-Autumn Festival, S3?

12 S3: terrible, too.

13 T: Terrible, too. Why? *Chinese*

14 Ss: yow (Chinese, yes). *Talked in Chinese*

15 T: You wanted to see a basketball game, right? Basketball or baseball?

16 S: Baseball.

17 T: Because of the typhoon, you can't see the baseball game. Who else? Whose Mid-Autumn Festival was great?

18 S: *Share his mate with his experience in Chinese.*

19 T: *Respond in Chinese.* So, S4, stand up, please. How was your Mid-Autumn Festival?

20 S4: So so.

21 T: So so. You are so so. Did you have a BBQ?

22 S4: Yes.

23 T: You have a BBQ. Was it delicious?

24 S4: Hihow (Chinese, so so)

25 T: So so. Hihow (Chinese, so so). Who went to Kaohsiung? Why did I ask?

26 Ss: *Sharing actively in Chinese.*

27 T: *Responded in Chinese.*

As the Conversation Analysis reveals, three main changes made by Diana in the teacher talk this time were: utilising feedback, employing referential questions and personalised questions. The features of Diana's teacher talk will be summarised in Table 5.11 below.

Different from the preliminary observation, Diana increased the F moves, adding acknowledgement and evaluation of students' answers. This exchange mode conformed to the first mode of Morri's 3rd position. However, her strategy of the F moves was limited to the repetition of students' words (e.g. in Turns 4-5, 8-9, 12-13, 20-21 in Activity1; Turns 14-15, 18-19, 20-21 in Activity 2), and praise such as 'good' was only seen in Turn 5, Activity 2. Repetition of students' words is referred to as 'teacher echo', a common phenomenon in any classroom (Walsh, 2002: 18). This can be regarded as a good and proper move in this research setting when students often could not be heard by the rest of the class.

As for error correction, no comments on form were observed, probably because

most students' responses were one or two words, so few mistakes were found. Diana's response was limited for some cases when students answered in Chinese, as in Turns 8 and 14 (extract 1). However, she sometimes responded to her students with correct English (recast, in Turn 25, Activity 1). Also, it would be interesting to explore why the students replied in Chinese for simply phrases such as 'yes', 'so so'.

In this activity, Diana used more referential questions, for example, in Turns 3, 7, 13 in Activity 1 and personalised questions (e.g. asked students' favourite fruit) to encourage students' further utterance. The talk in the first activity involved mostly referential questions and personalised questions, while the second was mostly display questions with the exception of Turn 17 ('Why?') and Turn 25 ('Why not?'). Referential questions inspire co-constructed meanings; as a result, they contribute to more successive exchanges of the teacher's questions and students' answers than the preliminary observation, for example, in Turns 1-10, Activity 1. However, only 'why' and 'why not' were used to encourage students' further utterance.

One main feature which remained in the teacher talk in these two activities was mainly teacher initiative. There is a very regular pattern of a teacher's turn followed by a single student's turn. The students still did not take the opportunity to initiate and only offered answers to the teacher's questions.

Turn 11, Activity 1, and Turns 5, 19 and 21, Activity 2 (Appendix 5.4) share a feature that one utterance immediately follows another, indicating that this teacher is filling in the gaps, which is pointed out by Walsh (2002) as discouraging learning potential. A result of this teaching feature in the observed situation may be that a teacher's turn contained more L2 than a student's turn.

In terms of peer's view on this teacher talk, Ken noticed that Diana smiles a lot in class, and he believes that this creates a supportive environment to encourage students to share and talk (KenPeer1). The students in the interview stated that they like *chatting* in English with their teacher. The small talk was perceived by the students as 'chatting', which should imply a relaxing, safe atmosphere. When Tomlinson (2014) recommends ways of increasing quality teacher talking time, one of them is teacher chat.

From the above Conversation Analysis, Diana's teacher talking time reveals several salient features, and these features can be evaluated according to the two criteria of the observation scheme: primary focus on meaning and learner participation (Table 5.11).

Table 5.11 Features of Diana's teacher talk in the first observation

Criterion \ Feature	Teacher talkIn the process
Primary focus on meaning	No comments on form (+) Employed referential questions (+) Employed personalised questions (+)
Interaction and involvement	Employed F moves, but only few (+) Mainly teacher initiative (-) Limit response time for learners (-) Provided supportive environment (+)

Although employing referential questions and personalised questions are put under 'primary focus on meaning', they also contribute to increasing learners' participation. Using referential questions to relate topics or contents to learners' own experience is always a useful strategy to raise students' desire to share (Lindstromberg, 2004).

To compare these features in the framework with those in Table 5.9 (in 5.1.4.2),

Diana's class contained more elements of communicative approaches and there were more successive exchanges. However, improvement still needs to be made. Evaluating the features of Diana's preliminary and first observed classes, I concluded that Diana needed skills to elicit more students' turns and more complex turns, and to allow more waiting time for students, and less filling the gaps, which may result in increases in learner responses, more complex answers, and greater interaction (Walsh, 2002).

5.2.1.2 Diana's first group work activities

After directing the students' attention and mental readiness for the reading through talk (Activity 2 in Appendix 5.4), Diana played a CD, asked about the main ideas and detail questions, taught the vocabulary for the reading, and asked the students to discuss their answers to the worksheet comprehension questions. When teaching the vocabulary, Diana still took the opportunity to ask them personalised questions such as 'Who likes mangoes?', 'Who lives with grandparents?' for teaching 'mangoes' and 'grandparents'. She asked students to repeat after her, and supplemented vocabulary, for example, adding 'night snack' for teaching 'snack' and wrote them on the blackboard.

The final activity was to unscramble the sentences in groups. Diana wrote several sentences (based on the reading) on separated slips in advance. The task for the students was to put these sentences in the correct order. Firstly, some students had no idea who was in their group, and Diana noticed that and directed them. Diana gave clear instructions about the goal of this activity, but not much on the rules concerning the process. In some groups the slips were in the hands of one or two students, and they did not seem familiar with ways of

cooperating in completing a task. Little English was heard spoken by them in interaction. Ken observed that ‘one group just opened the text book and pasted it following the order’ (KenPeer1). The analysis is summarised in the following table (Table 5.12).

Table 5.12 Analysis of Diana’s first group work activity

Criterion	In design	In process
Primary focus on meaning	Information is split from the reading text (+); no intention to practise on form (+)	Learners mainly focus on meaning (+) Little meaning negotiated (-)
Interaction and involvement	Discussion required (+)	Little interaction (-)
Goal	Unscramble the sentences (+)	Not achieved by interacting in L2 (-)

The students in the interview perceived completing the questions on the worksheet with peers as a different kind of activity from normal. They comment that they like cooperation in answering questions. They also commented that they like group discussion as one of their teacher’s innovations.

Commentary

The functions for this activity would be to check students’ comprehension about the reading, to train their coherence ability, and to use L2 in negotiation for meaning. However, to realise these functions, the teacher could have reminded students to work cooperatively by thinking through ways of doing the activity and by telling students some rules (e.g. read out your sentence(s) to your partners) so it would not just involve one or two students. If in reality the activity was operationalised in this way, it would be a task, which meets the criteria of primary focus on meaning, interaction and a goal to achieve.

Four clear changes by Diana in this lesson are: employing referential questions and giving feedback, asking personalised questions and group work. There is also evidence that her views on form had changed. For one thing, Diana no longer taught vocabulary in a traditional way. She frequently related the vocabulary to students by asking them personalised questions; there was interaction between the teacher and students. For another, she did not explain sentence by sentence for the text as she usually did (Interview 2). In these ways she showed that she was modifying her teaching procedure to communicative approaches. She planned to leave explaining form (e.g. vocabulary and grammar) in detail to the last. Judging that Diana changed her procedures, she clearly had a preliminary concept of a task.

Although some changes had been made, I concluded that Diana needs:

- skills to elicit more students' turns
- more waiting time for students, less filling the gap
- to develop students' ability to use L2 in group or pair activities

The influence on peers

In observing Diana's first class, Ken noticed that the students rearranged seats for sitting together. He perceived this seating arrangement as helping with forming a community of practice (KenPeer1). Here he also highlights the importance of student talk, and views sitting together as a crucial means for communication. Those influences on him can be observed in his upcoming observation.

5.2.2 Wendy

Ken and Diana joined me to observe Wendy's class. When Wendy announced 'Class begins!', her students rapidly moved their desks and chairs to sit in groups with five or six students in each group, facing the front. This took less than ten seconds and also declared the commencement of competition; Wendy added one point for the group which completed the seating rearrangement first. Salient features can be found in Wendy's teacher talk.

5.2.2.1 The features of Wendy's teacher talk

The first activity was a warm-up activity provided by the textbook. The topic of this lesson was care of family members. Each group was asked to say a sentence about a picture (six pictures in total). An extract is shown Appendix 5.5.

To start with, Wendy asked her students to repeat after her the title, 'What did their families do for them?' three times (Turn 1 to Turn 6). In Turn 7, the teacher started to draw their attention to meaning. In this turn, Wendy nominated a group, repeated the questions, and without any waiting time, she started to give them a hint, which drew the students' attention to who the people are, and what they are doing. In Turn 8, a student responded to her hint, and seemed to say something about the action. From this turn to Turn 14, there was negotiation for meaning to some extent, and it appeared to be successful, as in Turn 14, the student contributed a sentence which responded to Wendy's last question in Turn 7.

The process of negotiation for meaning was disrupted by Wendy's explicit correction on form in Turn 15. After this, Wendy did not give the same group an opportunity of uptake of the feedback by allowing more time for them to respond;

she turned to another group, and it is clear from Turn 16 that the flow was interrupted. Group 2 did not continue the earlier turns. However, Wendy made an attempt to offer support (Turn 17), and this led to another student's turn (Turn 18). In Turn 19, Wendy provided an evaluative F-move, of which the function is to give the student feedback about whether the response is acceptable (Cullen, 2002). This was closely followed by a reformulation of the student's answer, a strategy of the discorsal F-move. Nevertheless, Wendy immediately shifted the focus to the next topic.

In Turns 28-29, Wendy again interrupted her students' turn immediately when she predicted the students' mistake. She asked the whole class to follow her with the correct form. Wendy continued to guide her students to finish this 'look and say' activity according to the standard answers provided by the text book until the final picture. Whole class interaction was shown to be a teacher-dominated mode.

Evaluate the communicativeness of the teacher talk

Salient features can be found and evaluated according to the two criteria of the observation scheme: primary focus on meaning and learner participation, as summarized in Table 5.13 below. With regard to the first criterion, in the warm-up activity, pictures usually served as a meaningful context to discuss the topic related to self and family. In practice, however, the teacher frequently either asked the students to repeat after her (as in Turns 1-6, 23-26, 29-30) or reminded them of formal features (Turn 15). Occasionally, there are examples of co-constructed meaning, as Turns 8 to 14 show. There was a lack of employing referential questions and personalised questions.

Table 5.13 Features of Wendy's teacher talk in the first observation

Criterion \ Feature	Teacher talk
Primary focus on meaning	<p>Started with meaning-focused (+)</p> <p>Frequently shifted their attention to form (-)</p> <p>Negotiated co-constructed meaning (+)</p> <p>Lack referential questions (-)</p> <p>Lack personalised questions (-)</p>
Interaction and involvement	<p>Limit response time for learners (-)</p> <p>Limited strategies used for feedback(-)</p> <p>Put the 'standard answer' as priority (-)</p> <p>The way to give feedback interrupted the talk flow (-)</p>

With regard to the second criterion, learners' participation, similar with Diana, Wendy provided limited waiting time and filled the gap in the talk. This feature discourages learning potential (Walsh, 2002). Another feature related to feedback: Wendy used 'yes' and repetition (e.g. Turns 11, 19, 21), 'OK, good' (as in Turn 23), and sometimes 'Great!' or 'Wonderful', as observed in the rest of this lesson. Wendy seemed unaware of the importance of building on student responses to develop further students' participation.

Another feature is Wendy's acceptance of only the standard answers. In Turns 20-21, she rejected the student's answer 'take the medicine', only to accept another student's answer (Turns 22-23), 'The father told the daughter to take some medicine'. However, she immediately followed this by directing her students to another phrase, 'take care of', which is the standard answer in the textbook. She wrote this phrase, rather than the students' contribution, on the board. This feature, or a habit, combined both the first and the second criteria; teachers with this feature in teaching would restrict the possibility of co-constructed "other" meaning.

The other feature is related to error correction; the way Wendy corrected her students interrupted the flow of the students' turns. Later, the student (Turn 14) did not have the chance to reformulate his contribution; there is no way of knowing whether there was student uptake on the usage. In addition, from a quantitative aspect, the analysis identifies a low amount of learner involvement. Among these 30 turns, the students account for 15 turns: six turns are repeating after their teacher (Turns 2, 4, 6, 24, 26 and 30), and four turns involve L1 only. That leaves only five turns involving use of L2, as in Turns 12 and 14.

In this warm-up activity with more negative features than the positive ones, the results were few successive exchanges and that the teacher talked more than the students. This talk obviously is not considered as a communicative classroom discourse.

Commentary

For increasing learners' learning opportunities, Wendy needed skills to elicit more students' turns, for example, strategies of the F-moves, and modify ways of error correction. One way of achieving this goal for Wendy is to be more flexible to students' answers, as Johnson (1995) suggests. Another way is to allow more waiting time, and to postpone the response/feedback at least until a student finishes his/her turn.

Speaking from the aspect of PCK, those pictures may be incomprehensible to students, or the students may not have enough vocabulary knowledge to describe them. The teacher should have been aware of these, and done something for them, for example, let students discuss within their group first with prior preparation of "word bank" for their reference, as linguistic support.

However, Wendy held a different view. In her Reflection:

I should have guided students in the worksheet, the pictures, the usage of verbs. For, example, I asked a student, she replied, 'I taught math with my sister.' If I have guided them first, she could have spoken a correct sentence (Interview 2).

Following Long's (2000) reactive position for feedback on form, my beliefs are that learners would pay more attention to form instruction after they have attempted a correct form (trial and error). In this sense, providing feedback is particularly important. Therefore, in response to Wendy's and Diana's classes, I put teacher talk as a focus in the second workshop, and scheduled the discussion of negative feedback in the third workshop, which would be helpful especially for Wendy.

I suggested Wendy asking students further questions referring to personal experience. She simply rejected it, stating 'We don't have much time, because of the schedule'. In contrast, Diana had already started adding personalised questions as a feature of her practice.

5.2.2.2 The interview activity

The second activity was to interview their group members about what they did for their families by using 'What did you do for your families last week?'. All the three teachers designed it together (Figure 5.2). The students were required to fill in what they did and then interview their peers.

I. Warm-up:

(A) What did you (or your family) do for your family last week?

S	V	for O
I	read stories	for my daughters.

(B) Interview: What did your friend do for his/ her family last week?

Figure 5.2 the interview activity

While students were writing, Wendy kept hovering around and reminding students of the grammar rules and answered students' questions. It did not seem to me that they were engaging in interaction for the interview. Most of the time, the students lowered their heads. Since they were facing the front, some students had to turn around to work with their neighbours behind them. For the paired work, hardly noise was generated from the 15 pairs. It took them four and half minutes to write two sentences on their own, and to write two other sentences after interviewing each other. The wrap-up for this activity was that Wendy asked some students questions. It was only the teacher who asked questions.

Commentary

Evaluating its design, this activity involved personalised questions, and required students to interact. It should belong to Littlewood's Box 3, 'communicative language practice' (refer to Figure 3.5), because there were gaps, new information and personalised questions. However, in its process, the focus of Wendy's monitoring was on form instead of on helping the students to get their

meaning across. They did not seem to be engaging in interaction for interview. Afterward, I suggested some tips for the engagement in an email for all the teachers (refer to Appendix 5.6), due to limited time in the workshop.

5.2.2.3 Guessing word game

The final activity was a word guessing game. Wendy reviewed the vocabulary in this lesson and taught the part of speech before she introduced this game. The teacher thought of a word, and the students needed to guess what it was by asking questions, e.g. Is it a conjunction/noun?, and wrote the answer on an A3-sized, soft, magnetic white board.

In the peer feedback, Ken showed that he was aware of the potential of the guessing game. He commented, 'It arouses all the students' attention; all groups participate in the contest well' (KenPeer2). Diana was very interested in the use of the small whiteboard, and she asked some questions about it afterwards.

In regard to her students' views, the students in the interview perceived no differences in this lesson. Surprisingly, they believe they can learn speaking from such discrete questions and answers.

Commentary

This activity could be more communicative if the students could negotiate for meaning with the teacher. Although there were information gaps, little new information was exchanged. Therefore, this activity could not meet the criteria of Littlewood's 'communicative language practice' activity. Nonetheless, it was the only activity in this class that provided the students with the only opportunity to

ask questions.

Wendy's class had the features of being strongly teacher-centred, heavily form-focused, and interestingly mixed with "working" in group. My suggestion for her modification is to start from the "technique" level, which is less dependent upon the teacher's beliefs, and is thus believed to be straightforward to make. I suggest that Wendy:

- Employs strategies to elicit more turns
- Develops students' ability to discuss in L2
- Is aware of error correction, especially more waiting time for students

The influence on peers

This observation had some effects on Wendy's peers. Ken and Diana both noticed how Wendy asked her students to rearrange seats for group work in such an efficient way. They appreciated Wendy's class/group management skills. Ken thinks Wendy's 'awarding system (Bonus) can praise students, encourage students, and it helps students to concentrate in class, and helps students feel free to answer questions' (KenPeer1). Diana focused on when and how Wendy assigned scores; for example, the group which finishes first and learns from each other can gain points (DianaPeer1).

5.2.3 Ken's task-like activities

Wendy and Diana both joined me to observe Ken's class in a warm morning. The students followed Ken's order and moved desks and chairs to sit in group, face to face. Ken was the only teacher who made a major effort to try task-like

activities.

The 'Interview' activity

The first activity was the 'Interview', the same activity as Wendy did (Figure 5.2). What happened within the activity is described in the observation behaviour and strategy sheet below (Table 5.14). Within three minutes, ten students' behaviours were recorded. Ken kept hovering around the students without seeing or dealing with the inappropriate behaviours such as copying, talking in L1 only. Interaction in L 2 was only observed twice with one group involved each time. With the noises from the hanging fans, the students' voices were often incomprehensible to me. However, I chose to remain at the back of the classroom in order to maintain a position of not-intervention in the class.

Table 5.14 Observation behaviour and strategy sheet-Ken-1-1

Activity Students' behaviour	Observed group/minute	Teachers' strategies / note	Result to teachers' strategies
Activity1: interview	5 groups	Took 3 minutes	
<i>wrote individually</i>	/// (groups)	None	
<i>A student copied other's worksheet</i>	//		
<i>Interviewed in L2</i>	/		
<i>Talked in L1</i>	/		
<i>Seemed to do nothing</i>	/		
<i>Unclear (to the observer)</i>	//		
<i>Interviewed in L2</i>	/		
<i>Talked in L1</i>	/		
<i>Seemed to do nothing</i>	/		
<i>Unclear (to the observer)</i>	//		

Jigsaw activity

The second activity was a jigsaw activity. For a group of six students, three students who think their listening is better went outside to listen to the dialogue, while the other three stayed in the classroom to watch the mute video of the same dialogue. Then these two parts joined together to discuss the content of the dialogue. After three minutes, students' attention was turned to answering the related questions in the worksheet through discussion. Finally, Ken proceeded to check the answers.

How the students really did in this activity was recorded in the observation sheet (Table 5.15, Appendix 5.7). As seen in the table, there is evidence showing that the students were not used to group discussion. While some worked on their own to write the answers, others just copied others' answers. Some students were involved in discussion; however, for most of the cases, L2 was not heard in the process of negotiation for meaning. However, the students in the interview expressed their liking for this group activity and the opportunities to discuss with peers.

For the peers' feedback, Diana and Wendy both affirmed the creativity of this activity, and appreciated its potential value for making use of students' strengths.

Commentary

Usually jigsaw activities are designed to split either a reading or listening text. Ken's design separates the students' job into reading (watching in this case) and listening, which is very creative. The division is based on the students' ability. Jigsaw activities in design are a task, but in the process, the lack of interaction in

L2 counteracts the communicativeness of Ken's activity.

Discussion activity

The third activity was 'designing dialogues' (Figure 5.3 below), which was adapted by the three teachers together from my example of a discussion task. Based on the dialogue in the text book, they removed some turns. The teacher gave very clear instructions about the context (e.g. One of your classmates did not come to school yesterday), and how to do this activity (i.e. discuss with your group the possible reasons). He also guided students closely on how to complete each of the turns for A and B by comparing it with the textbook.

- 1A: _____, you didn't come to school yesterday, why?
2B: I didn't come because _____.
3A: What was wrong?
4B: I _____ and _____.
5A: I'm sorry about that. Did you see a doctor?
6B: _____.
7A: _____.
8B: _____.
9A: _____.
10B: _____.

Figure 5.3 The 'designing dialogues' activity

As recorded in the observation sheet (Table 5.16, Appendix 5.8), the general picture is that the students were not clear about how the discussion should develop, as some worked on their own and appeared to lack the habit of communicating in L2. On the other hand, some of the students seemed very interested; they asked a variety of questions about vocabulary or how to translate a phrase from Chinese into English. Also, frequently some groups were

observed sharing and exchanging opinions with peers during the ten-minute activity, with a mixture of L1 and L2. Finally, when the students were invited to present their work, two groups (out of five) immediately showed their eagerness to do so.

The students in the interview perceived Ken's changes in pedagogy were: grouping, group activity, discussion and brainstorming new ideas. They stated that they like all the changes including the teacher's interaction with them when doing group work.

Commentary

Applying the framework to evaluate the design with Criterion 1, Ken prepared a common real-life situation and students were required to communicate to co-construct meaning. The design allows students to use their imagination or creativity to think of the reason why the student did not go to school, and what happened. Some utterances have a clear structure and aim (from Turns 1 to 6), and this constrains the learners' choice of language. The structure of the dialogue becomes more open in the later turns (Turns 7 to 10), which provide the students with more freedom to co-construct meaning. This activity should be situated in Littlewood's Box 4, structured communication, where the teacher structures the situation to ensure that learners can deal with it with their existing language resources. In the process, however, Ken guided students closely on how to complete every turn of Role A and B during the activity, making it very structured, and thus counteracting the communicativeness of the activity.

Regarding the second criterion, this is a discussion activity in design. In its process, as Table 5.15 shows, non-communicative behaviours were

outnumbered communicative ones. In terms of the goal, the learners were required to discuss and construct a coherent conversation. According to the definition of a goal in this thesis, that is, a goal for learners must be achieved cooperatively with peers, so as to increase the negotiated interaction. In reality, some groups completed without sufficiently using L2. The results are summarised in Table 5.17 below:

Table 5.17 Evaluation of Ken's activity-1

Criterion	In design	In process/Outcome
Primary focus on meaning	Meaning focused (+) Some constraints on learner's language choice (-)	The teacher's close guidance to complete the turns made it more structured (-)
Interaction and involvement	Students required to interact (+)	Some engagement (+) Little use of L2 (-)
Goal	To construct a conversation (+)	Some groups completed (+/-)

The findings reveal that Ken's practice possesses the characteristics which contribute to the implementation of communicative approaches, such as openness to different answers, which is a crucial step to maximise learning opportunities. However, in this activity, Ken neglected the importance of interaction in L2 in the process, and provided too much structure or guidance.

Based on this observation where Ken employed mainly groupwork activities, the suggestions I made to Ken include:

- Using more L2 in instructions
- Strategies to increase students' engagement and involvement
- Some activities to build up students' habits and abilities to use L2 in group work

The influence on peers

Diana and Wendy both noticed and appreciated one of Ken's attributes of accepting different answers. He would never simply call them wrong, or reject them if they are not standard answers by the text book, as Wendy did. Instead, Ken would write them on the blackboard for anyone else to learn. Wendy noticed this aspect and shared her reflection in Workshop 2.

5.2.4 Workshop 2

For Workshop 2, the teachers could only be available to meet together for a 45 minute short time slot, right after finishing Ken's class. Prepared for unexpected events, I put the objectives into procedures according to their importance. That is, I selected sharing the experience or experiments, a key element in the reflective model, and reporting students' feedback from interviews as priorities. Each teacher had at least one of their peers to observe their class, and their peers provided feedback. Then we had further discussion here. The planned reflective activities had to be reduced, and I could only rely on group discussion to achieve the objective of helping the teachers understand and reflect on their beliefs. The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 2 is summarised in Table 5.18.

Achieved: ✓ Not/hardly achieved: X Partly achieved: Δ

No	Objectives in Workshop 2	
1	To understand and help teachers to understand their beliefs	Δ
2	To share the teacher's experience/experiments (the reflective cycle)	✓
3	To report students' feedback from interviews	✓
4	To discuss 'teachers' feedback'	Δ
5	To show more examples of communicative activities	Δ
6	To make plans for the next lesson	X

Table 5.18 The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 2

As already mentioned, Wendy “rejected” the opportunity to learn about theories from me. This reinforced my decision to utilise their peers’ lessons as models to get to my points. In addition, the relationship among the three action research teachers was very good, according to my observation and judging from some activities such as frequently designing worksheets together. I believed using peers’ strength to generate mutual learning would be a better idea than if I, as an outsider, ‘teach’ them. In this workshop, I planned to show them how TTT can function to enhance students’ participation and interaction. I started with a section of Diana’s teacher talking time. I began with a brief introduction of this interaction of Diana’s class, and presented a short video clip with a full transcription. Then I invited Diana to share with others her reflection on her use of referential questions and personalised questions. She reflected,

In the past, I asked a student a question and he/she answered to that, and I felt satisfied. After I listened to Tina, who told us the idea of asking further questions, now I try asking further questions. For example, I asked them, ‘How was your Mid-Autumn Festival?’. Some answered, ‘boring’, and I continued to ask them, ‘why?’. And I felt surprised to find that they could answer it; they could tell the reasons.

Next we read the transcription as role play, as Diana suggested; the atmosphere

was pleasant. Then I drew their attention to the theories on the handout. Time just allowed me to give brief lectures regarding teacher questioning, and two question types: display questions and referential questions. Next we briefly looked at the transcriptions of interesting classroom interactions in Sullivan (2000), Kumaravadivela (2003) and Cullen (2002). If the time had been sufficient, I could have let the teachers identify the IRF structure, and the functions of the F-moves in those cases. Most crucially, they could have shared their thoughts and inspired critical reflection. I suggested they study the turns between the teacher and students in these examples.

Another example of utilising peers' strength to generate mutual learning was when we discussed Ken's class. I was concerned by Wendy's teaching feature of only allowing the standard answers. Thus I highlighted Ken's positive approach in accepting different answers from students, with the aim of raising Wendy's awareness. I believe the plan worked. She commented on Ken's class:

You can accept and give other possible answers brought by students, which is very good, but for me, I usually warm up, hurry and wrap up in order to catch up the schedule. It never occurred to me this aspect.

Her self-reflection indicated that she noticed this aspect of being open to different answers. I would keep observing her development regarding this aspect.

In this workshop, Diana also shared her reflection about a major change: not explaining sentence by sentence as she usually did. She reflected, 'because I want to try 'task'. She stated that she checked the students' answers, and 'found their answers were OK' (meaning no obvious difference in their performance). However, she continued that '... but really OK?'. Then Wendy commented: 'We

ourselves do not stop being worried' in response to Diana's concern. Through this collaborative reflection with Wendy, she then was aware that the insecurity came from herself, as she responded: 'Yes, we do not stop being worried'.

Interested in communicative approaches, John, the non-participant consultant to this research, carried out his own action research during this 1st cycle of the AR. He planned "tasks" according to his understanding, implemented them, observed his class by video recording and interviewed his students, and reflected critically on his old and new instruction. John shared with us his reflections and the extract is shown in Appendix 5.9. He put the previous talks with me more logically in summarising teachers' development of practising communicative approaches. He pointed out that providing opportunities for students to orally practise sentence structures, and using group competitions are not communicative approaches. John understands now that only when the lesson becomes student-centred do they employ communicative approaches. John continued by sharing the video clips of his class doing tasks and interviews with students. His students showed very engaged and interested in tasks, and this seemed to encourage all the teachers.

The last thing I did in this cycle was sending their peer observation sheets, which were later typed by me. I sent my written feedback to Wendy and Ken individually, with the transcription of class talk, and the observation sheets. For the feedback, I used a very circumlocutory tone to avoid annoying them. At the end of the mails, I expressed my appreciation for their participation again.

As mentioned earlier, the main reasons for discouraging the implementation of communicative approaches in some EFL contexts are assumed to be contextual factors, teachers' personal theories, and lack of knowledge, drawing from the

literature. I assumed teachers' beliefs were the most crucial factor. At that moment, my assumption was being challenged since the general impression was that 'lack of knowledge' was the most striking. I believe the principles of communicative approaches make sense to these experienced teachers; once they understand, they are willing to try.

5.3 The teachers' practitioner knowledge development in the second research cycle

The second cycle commenced from the second observations which took place from 28th October to 4th November, 2013. During these days class teachers were extremely busy, since the third week of October was the first Mid-term exam, and the school anniversary was coming soon in early November. The observations started with Diana's class, then Ken's and finally Wendy's.

5.3.1 Diana

This lesson started from rearranging seats from rows to six blocks, three groups with six students and three groups with four students sitting face to face. Then Diana announced the objectives of the lesson, which were the reading, doing a jigsaw activity, and answering questions on the worksheet. Ken was an observer with me. In this lesson, Diana showed her changes to teaching form and her preliminarily developed context-based communicative activity.

5.3.1.1 Diana's changes in teaching form

The first activity was teaching vocabulary with word-picture cards. When Diana

introduced the first word on the card, 'wonderland', she paused to repeat the goals of the lesson to indicate to the students that the vocabulary would be used for the later reading activities.

Diana's teaching style was different from the first observation in a number of ways. For example, for teaching 'wonderland', she started with the definitions: 'It is a place, a land, which is very good... '. At other times she started with an example, and then asked students to tell her the meanings of the word in Chinese. For example with the item 'bank', she said 'We save money in the bank and you will have more money. So, what is a bank?' She also used pictures as a meaningful context. For instance, 'Tell from the picture, the lady is entering the classroom, so, what does 'enter' mean?' While introducing the vocabulary, she kept interacting with students, and seemed more conscious of this. However, most of the questions were concerned with form; for example, 'What's the part of speech for the vocabulary'? Occasionally, she asked questions regarding students' own experience, such as, 'Do you like running races?' when teaching 'running race'. She did not write on the board. Diana later explained that it was because she would like to use the time more in interaction with her students. She always asked her students to repeat the vocabulary items after her. She told the students earlier that she would assign scores, but she forgot to.

Within the 14 minutes of teaching, students seemed to have gone off task, chatting and laughing with neighbours. Nonetheless, when the teacher asked questions, a few students volunteered an answer. At times when she asked questions, Diana called on a student who was selected from one group with the most volunteered students (a strategy learnt from observing Wendy's classes). The features of this activity are summarized in Table 5.19.

Table 5.19 Features of Diana's teaching of vocabulary in O2

Criteria	In design/intention	In process
Primary focus on meaning	<p>Started with examples (+)</p> <p>Putting new vocabulary in their context (+)</p> <p>Utilised pictures to create a meaningful context(+)</p>	<p>Taught and asked parts of speech (-)</p> <p>Asked students to repeat the new vocabulary after her (-)</p> <p>Occasionally asked personalised questions (-)</p>
Interaction and involvement	<p>Used pictures in the hope of eliciting students' talk (+)</p>	<p>Lukewarm responses (-)</p> <p>The talk was dominated by the teacher (-)</p>

Commentary

In this lesson, Diana continued making much modification towards communicative approaches, as the analysis using the observation framework reveals. Activity 1 is for teaching vocabulary; however, rather than focusing on transmitting knowledge in a traditional approach, by starting with examples including the new words (an inductive approach), Diana added new perspectives to this activity. This indicated that Diana already had the concepts of putting new vocabulary in their context and learning through using, which are key principles of communicative approaches.

She also used pictures in the hope of eliciting students' talk, as she reflected, 'This time I used the word cards because there are pictures being topics for us to talk more'. However, the attempt to make the students talk more was not very successful. Possibly because she still taught and asked parts of speech, and asked students to repeat the new vocabulary after her, her students did not perceive that Diana had shifted her focus in teaching vocabulary, since in the

interview, her students reported that they merely noticed Diana's use of word cards as a change. The talk was dominated by the teacher, and this may also have been the cause for those students' perception of this act as form-focused, and consequently uninteresting.

Diana spent nearly 20 minutes on the first two activities. The teacher-centred "lecture" appeared uninteresting to her learners. She could have used the F-moves better to elicit more turns from students and have involved students more. Diana's PCK (pedagogical content knowledge; more formal knowledge of communicative approaches) appeared to be starting to develop faster than her PK (practical knowledge; the knowledge applied in practice). Although Diana stated that her purpose was to invite more student talk, she was confined to her existing PK. Her developing PK (skills) of using F-moves and feedback to elicit more turns from students could not enable her to make prompt decisions for on-line practice.

Diana considered these activities to be necessary for the later jigsaw task. However, I suggested that she only needed to list the vocabulary and practise pronunciation, and let students learn its usage from the reading. This way could reduce the "boring" time and move to the next task more quickly which may create more learning opportunities.

5.3.1.2 Diana's preliminarily developed context-based communicative approaches

Jigsaw reading activity

After teaching the vocabulary, Diana employed a jigsaw reading activity. She had

divided the text, slightly revised from the reading, into six parts and distributed the slips to each group. My example of a jigsaw task was to distribute pieces of information among groups; each group deals with their own information first and then joins other groups to put these pieces together. Diana confined the pieces of jigsaw within a group to avoid students walking around (she stated later that she does not like mess or chaos).

When Diana gave detailed instructions, some students had already started reading. She walked around checking and answering students' questions. The time for reading (around 100 words) lasted for five minutes, some students later seemed to lose engagement. When Diana sensed this, she asked her students to stand up and read again.

The second half of this activity was to answer five comprehension questions. Diana distributed the A3-size soft magnetic whiteboard (borrowed from Wendy) to each group. The students needed to listen to Diana's questions and write answers on the magnet whiteboard. Some groups took turns writing the answer while other groups let the same person write all the answers. Cooperation was observed; for instance, someone was looking for answers from the slips, pointing or reading them out to their partner who was writing the answer (see Figure 5.4 for the photo). Finally another member brought it to the front blackboard for their teacher to check. The students were (and needed to be) very focused on listening to the teacher's questions. Finally, Diana checked the answers from the six groups one by one.



Figure 5.4 Photo of the jigsaw reading activity in Diana's second observed class-1

The same procedures were followed for the first four questions, then for the last question, Question 5, Diana made some changes. She asked a student from each group to go to the blackboard, listen to her question and write down the answer. Each group was allowed to send another student to help. This doubled the number of students in participating compared to individual work (see Figure 5.5 for the photo). Most of the students were very excited to finish this task, and eager to do it rapidly.



Figure 5.5 Photo of the jigsaw reading activity in Diana's second observed class-2

Giving peer feedback, Ken commented that this jigsaw reading 'allows more chances for students to practice speaking and listening, i.e. use language'. He also commented that Diana 'turned the check of reading comprehension into

competition games' (PeerKen2).

The interviewed students perceived that from this activity, they 'can get more impressed by reading to others and by listening to others'. They commented on the whole lesson:

'We like the changes in answering questions'.

'We can learn more and be more interested in English.'

'Today's lesson was super fun!'

In addition to finding it fun, Diana's students perceived the last activity as possessing the potential of replacing FonFs practice. When they suggested not writing on a worksheet, I asked how they could practice for exams. They pointed out that activities such as this one can train their writing skills and provide similar results. I hoped their teacher could be as confident as they were.

Diana seemed very satisfied with this lesson. She shared her reflection: 'A boy seldom engaged in class, not volunteered in answering question, but this time I saw him participating in the activity. I am happy to see more students engage in class.'

Commentary

A jigsaw activity is considered as an example of a task, in which information is split, and the exchange of information is required (Ellis, 2003; Littlewood, 2004). The gaps of information actually pushed the students to interact when answering comprehension questions in the second half of the activity. This activity satisfies the three criteria for a task both in its design and in its process to some extent.

Several improvements could be made. The way the teacher checked the

answers was creative and exciting to the students. However, this procedure also shows negative features since this was back to the teacher-dominated mode. Also in this way, she did not allow herself time to stand back and observe the class.

The most striking finding is that this class shows Diana was developing a context-sensitive communicative approaches pedagogy. Earlier in the first workshop, Diana shared her worries about whether learning would happen in group work, and she believed that she would feel more relaxed when she saw the students write something. This time she developed a combination of a communicative activity with answering reading comprehension questions in written form.

The most significant breakthrough for Diana is in group work. She arranged more time for group work; the time spent on the first two activities (more FonFs) and the last task (mainly FonM) was 19 and 25 minutes respectively. Also the crucial move was the seat arrangement in a more group-work-friendly manner. However, Diana still needed to improve her group work management, using strategies such as assigning group leaders, setting up some rules for ensuring cooperation, and assigning a scoring scheme to control chatting.

The second main change is that she abandoned the Grammar-Translation method for teaching the reading text. The third main change is that she shifted the focus of form-focused practice and added aspects of communicative approaches to it. She had already started practising the “theory” of learning an L2 through using it in meaningful contexts, i.e. by means of pictures and examples in this lesson.

5.3.2 Ken

On 30th October, Diana joined me to observe this class. Ken's students were coming back from the rehearsal activity for celebrating the school anniversary. They students seemed restless and tired. Later some students were observed sleeping.

Ken displayed the seat arrangement on PowerPoint slides and asked these students to sit in groups accordingly. Six students were in a group with a total of five groups. Some sat face to face while some groups sat facing the board. Then group leaders came to the podium to get the worksheets. The class formally began fifteen minutes behind the schedule. This lesson showed guidance and modelling still dominating in Ken's class and his awareness of learners' involvement in the task.

5.3.2.1 Guidance and modelling still dominating in Ken's class

The first activity was a warm-up in their textbook, with four pictures to talk about offering help (Appendix 5.10). On the worksheet, the students were asked to fill in the blanks. One example is:

In picture 1, there is a man on a _____ (輪椅; wheel chair). He is ready to _____ the bus.

The parentheses show the hint in Chinese.

Ken had been increasing the use of English instructions and gave illustrations of the pictures in English. Ken asked students to look at the pictures and answer his questions, for example, 'What do you see?', trying to invite the students'

contributions. However, few students answered. Ken answered himself and wrote the standard answers on the board. Most students wrote down the answers. The last question (Q5) shifted to an open ended question, 'What did you do to help people?' Ken asked the class to discuss this question for 30 seconds and report their answer. The discussion among students was not clearly audible to me, nor to Diana. I was not convinced they were on topic.

In the post-observation discussion, which Diana joined, I expressed my concern regarding the lukewarm discussion for Q5. Diana responded quickly, 'should design it as an interview', and Ken showed his agreement. The interviewed students, however, viewed the change in Q5 positively. They claimed that they discussed together, and that: 'We are willing to discuss, and we think our classmates like it as well'.

Commentary

As the worksheet shows, this warm-up activity looks like a structured exercise. This 10-minute activity is more inclined to Littlewood's (2004: 321) 'Pre-communicative language practice', for 'practising language with some attention to meaning but not communicating new messages to others'.

Listening/reading comprehension activity

The second activity was answering questions based on the dialogue. The procedure was: listen to the dialogue in the video twice with their books closed, and answer questions. Ken did not leave them alone for the questions; he played the video again, stopped when the answer showed and told them the answer. In addition, he explained some new words in English. Little interaction took place in L2 between students and Ken, apart from the occasional moments

when Ken asked students personalised questions.

Reflection

When talking about changes which he had made, Ken replied that he attempted to let the students understand the meaning 'directly' from the dialogue, and then proceed next to the unscramble activity. He further explained what he meant by 'directly':

By playing the video twice, without my grammar instruction or translation, I let them comprehend the meaning from the video themselves.

Judged by that, Ken has already understood the notion of starting from a meaningful context, put meaning as primary, and to make an attempt to relate the topic to students themselves by asking them personalised questions. Diana noticed that Ken asked personalised questions when checking answers, and this gave inspiration to Diana's following classes. However, this FonM activity did not include the feature of participation in interaction. Later Ken continued: 'I should have provided them with opportunities to discuss and find answers themselves'.

Commentary

These two activities show that Ken believed a teacher should have the responsibility to guide his/her students and model input. Few opportunities were created to allow the students to use the L2. However, the second activity indicates that Ken was shifting from using the Grammar-translation method to focusing back on meaning, as the purpose of learning from the dialogue.

5.3.2.2 Awareness of learners' involvement in the task

The third activity was 'Running dictation', which is similar to Woodard's (2003) 'messenger dictation'. As a group activity, the goal was to unscramble ten segments, which were placed on the walls in the classroom. Ken asked two students in a group to be messengers, going out to read the segments on the walls, and this left four group members still seated. The messengers were running back and forth to report to their group. They promptly developed their own strategies for carrying out the task; for example, some kept repeating the sentence to themselves while walking back to their group. Ken was walking around checking. Some students who were observed sleeping earlier were awake. The results were that two groups got all the sequences right, two groups got it slightly wrong and one group did not finish.

Reflection

Diana, Ken and I all agreed that ten segments were too many and it took Ken three minutes to stick them on the walls; they should be cut down to five or six. It was Ken's first time using this activity he learnt before, and he said he needed to practice to get familiar with it and then develop a most appropriate procedure. Ken also decided that next time he would make some sentences easier for less able students in order to increase their involvement. Ken pointed out that he made a new attempt to put meaning as primary. He observed the students cooperating and discussing actively with some division of work. In his reflection:

This is not the same as I did before, keep letting students repeat after me; they are really 'learning'. Letting students repeat after the teacher cannot last long in their memory. The result was students seemed interested, participation increased.

This activity was the most interesting one to Ken's interviewed students. They believed that they could be more familiar with the textbook content by carrying messages. They expressed their wish to have more activities of this type. Diana liked this activity, commenting: 'It is a good way to train students' listening'.

Commentary

This activity started with a meaningful text which was adapted from the dialogue. With the information split between the scribe and the messenger, a messenger must report what he/she read to a scribe to complete the goal; that is, communication is required and leads to communicative results. Therefore, it can be regarded as a task in terms of the three criteria in evaluating both its design and the process.

Reviewing Ken's progress with the conclusion drawn from the 1st observation, the results are that Ken used more instruction in L2. Although Ken successfully employed a task, this does not mean that he had developed the strategies to increase learners' engagement. It is the activity itself which has the potential to "push" students to interact in L2. However, he already noticed the aspects regarding students' engagement and involvement. In this task, once again Ken showed that he was abandoning grammar instruction or translation, trying to allow the students to learn from the text itself.

5.3.3 Wendy: Combination of FonFs instruction in meaningful contexts

On 4th November, Diana and John observed Wendy's class. Although Wendy planned to teach the infinitive, she actually combined FonFs instruction in meaningful contexts. This time students became sitting facing to each other.

Wendy asked her students to read the title 'What Do You Plan to Do?' to purposely elicit the new form, to-V, the infinitive. She asked her students what 'to do' means and what the grammatical rule is called, and then she taught the infinitive for about two minutes with a FonFs-explicit deductive instructional mode. Then Wendy explained how to complete the first activity, shown in Figure 5.6 below:

*Look at the pictures below and talk about what they want/plan/need/love to do.
Match each sentence with the right pictures.*

1. Sally has a _____. She needs to _____.
2. Billy's sister was angry with Billy. He really wanted to _____.

Figure 5.6 Activity for the infinitive

Wendy gave instructions and demonstrated the first two questions for five minutes. Then she left the students to discuss and answer the questions in their group. Within the ten minutes, the codes from observing students' behaviours included 'worked individually', 'talked to group', 'looked at other's answer', 'flipped the book', 'studied something on the book', and 'interacted with group actively'. Wendy walked around the groups, encouraging the students frequently to think of as many different answers as possible.

When it was time to check answers for these ten questions, Wendy asked her students to read out their answers. In contrast with the last two observations, she kept asking whether the rest of class had different answers after one answer was provided. The utterances for encouraging students include:

There is no standard answer.
Tell me other answers.
What else?

The students responded actively, they put up their hands high in the air, eager to be called (see Figure 5.7). The session proceeded for 11 minutes. The next activity on the worksheet is similar to the first one, only with a different structure, which is, for example, 'It is _____ for Sally to _____'. The procedures and the students' behaviours were also similar to the first one.



Figure 5.7 The students' response in Wendy's grammar activity combined with group discussion

Both teachers criticised this activity: John thought there was too much focus on form; Diana believed there was a cognitive gap between the first and the second activities, and suggested the gap should have been filled with some other activities. Wendy agreed with her. However, from an interlanguage perspective, some students may feel the second sentence structure is easier to learn.

Reflection

When asked the purpose of these activities, Wendy replied promptly that they were for practising grammar. However, the design integrates grammatical rules with meaning and includes freer group discussion, which are examples of

changes that Wendy had made. However, Wendy perceived her changes as it was the first time she only finished one page of the worksheet. Nonetheless, she was aware that this slow pace resulted from her students' active responses to her invitation of thinking different answers.

On the other hand, in the interview, her students' perceptions of her changes in teaching practice include a more open mind to different ideas, more active lessons, more relevance to life, and more group discussion. These changes featuring the characteristics of communicative approaches were liked by these students.

Admittedly, as a complete observer, I kept some distance from those students, and this led to a drawback— I was not able to observe their behaviours clearly, especially when their actions were not very noticeable. I addressed the question of whether their interaction involved with L2 or not to Wendy. Wendy pointed out that she did not observe any students interacting in English, and she thought most of the students did individual work rather than discussion. It seems to me that she did not expect students to discuss in English.

However, as for her students, the students stated that they liked to discuss with peers and were willing to try to interact in English. In an attempt to understand how the students' discussion worked, I came up with an idea of asking Wendy's students to demonstrate to me how they discussed. They first wrote individually, and then they shared and compared one another's ideas. Apart from the target language, e.g. 'high fever', 'sore throat' (taking Question 1 above for example), the interaction was conducted in L1.

Commentary

In the design, each item comprised two sentences. The first sentence shows a situation coupled with a picture, which suggests what the subject in the second sentence needs (or wanted, etc.) to do. This draws the students' attention to meaning, so they need to distinguish the difference among those verbs (want/plan, etc.) than to the form, V to V. Therefore, it puts meaning as primary. However, the communicativeness of this activity cannot be explained with Littlewood's (2007) framework. It is not a discrete FonFs exercise (Box 1, refer to Figure 3.5); this activity has the potential to draw learners' attention mostly to meaning. However, it does not fit the criterion of Box 3 as there is no information gap.

In relation to interaction and involvement which this activity led to, the students were asked to discuss with their members, and encouraged frequently by Wendy to think of as many different answers as possible. She would not have done this without the inspiration from Ken's attitudes towards different answers.

In this observation, Wendy reduced her dominant roles, so as to generate more students' turns. Wendy gave time for her students to discuss first and then asked their answer; therefore, few errors were committed by her students, and the students could respond promptly. However, due to little interaction in L2, she still needed to develop some activities to build up the students' habits and abilities to use L2 in group work.

In evaluation of Wendy's PCK, she started with a deductive FonFs approach to present the rules, and then supported them with examples. The infinitive is easy for the learners in this context, drawing from my own PCK; thus I am inclined to guide students to find the rule themselves from examples. When I mentioned

that it would not be less effective to let students learn grammar through use, she responded with: 'actually, I intended to let them practise the infinitive. I think the results are satisfactory. Students could think of a lot of verbs'. This response did not seem related to communicative approaches. Later in private, John told me that Wendy had not understood them yet. We both agreed that was caused by her short moments with us in every workshop.

Wendy's understanding of 'using an L2' was improved from "answering her questions" to now "making sentences". This time she witnessed that her students could think independently and had the ability to make sentences. It was hoped that she could take a step further to let her students try open discussion, as I encouraged her.

Influence on peers

Wendy's students' engagement was often high, and two reasons may contribute to this. One is her active encouragement, so many students were willing to share their ideas in English. The other is her highly skilful classroom management. Diana's attention was on Wendy's group work management skills. She listed five good points of Wendy's lesson; four out of five are related to group work management; for example:

- The way to arrange seats for group activity rapidly (within 20 seconds)
- The way to assign scores to encourage cooperation with groups
- Assigning group leaders to check members' answers to save time

(peerDiana2)

This aspect which Diana had noticed happened to be the skills that she herself needed.

5.3.4 Workshop 3

In the 3rd workshop, Diana, Wendy and I had about one hour discussion and were then joined by John. Ken had prior commitments. In this observation, I found the teachers need activities to develop students' abilities to conduct group/pair work; therefore, I showed some communicative activities (Procedure 6) were presented through loop input (Woodward, 2003) (Appendix 5.11); the three teachers appeared to be very interested in these activities and expressed their beliefs about the practicability in their practice and would try some of them.

For this workshop, I planned to include negative feedback or error correction, as it is a very important principle in TBLT and most other approaches in language teaching (Long, 2000). However, the teachers had hardly used any up to then. I planned to draw on this formal knowledge of negative feedback when commenting on the teachers' own lessons, using their transcription as an example, since these teachers did not like theories. However, only Diana did some teacher talking and there were few cases involving error correction. Coupled with the problem of lack of sufficient time, I decided to leave it for the teachers to read in their own time. The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 3 for the attendance of Wendy and Diana is summarised in Table 5.20 below:

Table 5.20 The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 3

Achieved: ✓ Not/hardly achieved: X Partly achieved: Δ

No	Objectives in Workshop 3	
1	To understand and help teachers to understand their beliefs	✓
2	To share the teacher's experience/experiments (the reflective cycle)	✓
3	To report students' feedback form interviews	✓

4	To discuss teachers' feedback	x
5	To introduce the use of authentic input	√
6	To show more examples of communicative activities	√
7	To make plans for the next lesson	X

The first three objectives were the main focuses in the workshop. During the group discussion, Wendy reflected and realised that she used too much time in giving instructions and demonstration, and also designed too many questions. Ken's job finished after Diana and Wendy left. He seemed very tired, so I just briefed him some key points of our discussion.

Due to Ken's absence, I did some extra work, i.e. a short summary for the second cycle, included some photos, and the peers' and students' feedback, and emailed to all of them. I made some suggestions below the photos, such as:

Some activities can be designed to allow time for yourself to stand back and observe your class.

While you are hovering observing your students, it may help for you to note down something to report to the class later, e.g. common errors on form, good ideas, etc.

I found these data organised this way provide a more holistic picture. Therefore, after that time, I prepared classroom photos with the descriptions of the class, the students' feedback and the peers' views as well as my views on the classroom activities. My reflection at this stage was that, with the coursebook to follow, it must take very expert teachers to design tasks. They should have sufficient knowledge of communicative approaches and a repertoire of ideas for communicative activities. This is not a short-term goal to achieve. Since it was clear that the teachers still needed support with designing communicative activities, I decided to provide them with more detailed modelling examples, starting from lesson five, with more alternative activities to choose from. I want

them to see that some communicative activities can replace explicit FonFs instruction to learn form.

5.4 The teachers' practitioner knowledge development in the third research cycle

Diana's and Wendy's third observations took place on 9th December, after the second Mid-term exam and feedback to their students. Due to Ken's unexpectedly serious flu, his observation was postponed until 18th December and Workshop 4 was postponed to the 20th. The observations started with Diana's class, then Wendy's and finally Ken's.

5.4.1 Diana

This observation was joined by Wendy. This time students sat in three main sections of seats, as three big groups. Without clear dividing line, there were six groups, all faced the front (Diana later told me that she forgot to ask them to sit face to face). It was the first lesson of a new unit, Lesson 7, of which the topic was how to keep healthy. Diana continued showing improvement in teacher talk and developing her own pedagogy.

5.4.1.1 Improvement in teacher talk

The first activity was to match the causes and effects of the unhealthy habits on the worksheet, as shown in Figure 5.8 below.

Group Activity: Matching

Please match the problems with the possible causes (起因).

get fat	chat with friends late at night
get nearsighted (近視)	eat a night snack
have a toothache	stay online (待在線上) all the time
often catch a cold	stay up (熬夜)
have a stomachache	seldom brush teeth
get pimples (青春痘)	go to the gym every week
	seldom eat fruit
	not wash hands before eating

Figure 5.8 Diana's Activity1: Discussing the causes and effects of the unhealthy habits

Next Diana distributed the small whiteboards to each group and drew their attention to the instruction: to write one sentence about the causes and effects of healthy habits on the small whiteboard. She showed an example:

We get fat when we _____

The students were observed completing the work by interacting within their groups. Next the students were asked to pass the board to the next group and write another sentence on their neighbour's board without repetition. After this, the students put the small whiteboards onto the blackboard for the teacher to check the answers. While checking the answers, Diana asked frequently personalised questions, as the extract below shows.

Non-language moves are described in italics.

1T: *Reading one of the group's sentence.* We got pimples when we stay up late. Do you agree?

Do you have pimples? *Some students put up their hands. Approaching to one.* How do you feel?

2S1: So ugly.

3T: So ugly. Do you like to get pimples? *Asking the class.*

4Ss: No.

5T: Do you know how to solve the problem?

6S2: 不要吃太油 (Chinese, don't eat greasy food).

7T: 不要吃太油. *Turned around to add one credit for that group where the student was.* What else? How do you solve the problem?

8S3: Wash face often.

9T: YES! *Turned around to add one credit for the group.* And,

10S: Drink more water.

Then Diana shifted their focus to check the writing on the second whiteboard, while there were still several hands hanging in the air for wanting to answer. The students seemed very interested in the topic, and some shared something with peers in private.

With this language input, the second activity was the warm-up activity in the textbook for the students to practise ways to stay healthy. In between, Diana again asked frequently personalised questions. The class were more enthusiastic than usual; a few students raised their hands, wanting to answer.

Diana seemed very satisfied with her recent changes. She was continually using personalised questions. This was also perceived by the interviewed students. They felt that this type of question led the lesson more authentic to life, and these questions are easier to answer. Diana also felt more confidence in group work management.

Commentary

These two activities (17 and 6 minutes respectively) were used as pre-reading activity, providing language input for the later task. Diana did not pre-teach vocabulary but just noted the Chinese notes in the parentheses (see Figure 5.8) and let students read on their own, as I suggested last time. She understood that

the students could do as required without her pre-teaching the vocabulary, a PK she then gained.

It became clear that Diana's skills to ask personalised questions had been further improved. Four out of five of the teacher initiated turns involved 'Do you...' questions. In Turn 1, the utterance, 'Do you agree?' invited learners' to share their opinions. However, she immediately initiated another question without waiting for students to respond.

Furthermore, more successive exchanges were observed. The flows went well between the teacher and students; in Turn 5, the question links to the topic of the lesson. After the first answer (in Turn 6), she rewarded the student with a point to his group, and used 'what else' to invite more students' contribution. The next three turns (Turns 8-10) responded to the same question, which is new compared to O1. In addition, the complexity of students' turns increased slightly compared with Extract 1 in O1 (Turns 16-24), but could be increased further. Table 5.21 below shows the comparison of the features of Diana's teacher talk between the first observation and this one.

Table 5.21 Comparing the features of Diana's teacher talk

Feature Criteria	Teacher talk		Results	
	O1	O3	O1	O3
Primary focus on meaning	No comments on form (+)	Remain (+)	Some successive exchanges (+)	More successive exchanges (+)
	Employed referential questions (+)	Increased (+)		
	Employed personalised questions (+)	Increased (+)		
Interaction and involvement	Evaluative F move, but only few (+)	Increased (+)	Teacher spoke more than students (-)	Students' contribution increased (+)
	Mainly teacher initiative (-)	Remain (-)		
	Limit response time for learners (-)	Observed once (-)		
	Provided supportive environment (+)	Remain (+)		

5.4.1.2 Diana's developing pedagogy

The lesson processed into the last activity: group discussion. The objective was to let each group write Dos and Don'ts regarding keeping healthy on the magnetic whiteboard. Some cooperation was observed: the students worked together, contributing and sharing ideas. Finally, another member rushed to the blackboard for their teacher to check their magnetic whiteboard. When the teacher checked their answers, the students concentrated on how many correct answers they got even when the bell rang for break time. The students were like an audience who were watching a thriller movie. Their emotions went up and down as the teacher checked their answers.

Wendy commented: 'Passing the whiteboard to other groups enables students to work in from their small group to bigger groups. They can feel the power of teamwork'. Diana's observation was that the students were "pushed" to discuss. The students in the interview found it novel.

Commentary

This activity can bring up the students' ideas and has the elements of meaning-focused, interaction and involvement and a goal to achieve. The processes of carrying out the activity also met the criteria to some extent. Therefore, it can be considered as a highly communicative activity. This activity also shows the teachers that reactive feedback may be more effective than FonFs instruction alone.

Diana carried on developing the combination of a communicative activity with writing, as her unique pedagogy, since she worried about whether learning would happen in group work if they merely do it orally. This time she took a step

further to extend the function of the whiteboards by letting them “travel” around groups. The students could also learn from other groups in a time efficient way.

One more thing that Diana needed to improve was group work management skills, such as assigning group leaders and developing a scoring scheme. This time she made great progress in using scoring scheme to control chatting and encourage learners’ contribution.

5.4.2 Wendy

In this session, the class started learning Lesson 7. Diana was the co-observer with me. Wendy showed her further improvement in FonM practice, but still neglected the importance of interaction in L2.

5.4.2.1 Further improvement in FonM practice

After Wendy announced the class affairs for ten minutes, the English class started with the warm-up activity for a new lesson. She said:

Now let’s look at Lesson 7. Now open your book to page 77. Tell me, do you have a healthy life? How do you do to keep healthy?

Then she wrote ‘keep healthy’ on the blackboard and explained the phrase. Each group was in charge of describing one of the six pictures. They had done a similar activity in O1; however, several differences were made, as summarised in Table 5.22 (Appendix 5.12). First, she did not draw their attention to form, nor did she require the students to repeat after her. Comments were made just for meaning this time. Second, there were more events of negotiation for meaning.

Third, more techniques of F-moves were employed. Fourth, she extended her waiting time and was more patient to allow students to think of appropriate answers. These four differences can be found in an example of a student's contribution, 'brush teeth'. She responded with 'prompt' technique: 'really? When is the best time?'. Then the student responded, saying 'after meals'. Sometimes, she adjusted a student's answer explicitly; for example, when a student said, 'wash hands', Wendy told the class, 'wash hands OFTEN is more proper'. These four features were also evident when she responded to a student who answered: 'she often drinks water'. She attempted to elicit a more appropriate answer by asking the class, 'is that a good way?', and 'how much water do you need to drink a day?', and the students appeared happy to take a guess. In addition, she gave her students the chance to apply previously learnt knowledge, whenever it was appropriate for her to do so. Her patience also showed when she reminded the students to use a phrase which they had learnt earlier. She allowed time for them to recall it. With these positive features of communicative approaches, the students' interaction with teacher was encouraged.

For the first five pictures, Wendy only mentioned grammar rules when a student asked a question related to grammar. She gave some grammar instruction for two minutes, and then told the class, 'we don't need to take much time on this'. Then she carried on the final picture.

Commentary

Describing pictures is not a communicative activity since there is no information gap to push learners to interact and co-construct meaning. However, Wendy's students are used to discussing, as the students in this interview stated that they took time to discuss. Along with Wendy's five new features, this activity provided

opportunities for the student to use their pre-existing knowledge to express themselves. Provided with Wendy's feedback, they could better use these phrases as input for the next discussion activity. It is interesting to note that in O1, Wendy's solution to dealing with her students' awkward responses was to provide more guidance before they described the pictures. However, she did not try it out, but improved her F-moves with a focus on meaning.

In this warm-up activity, the topic itself is closely related to the learners. However, most of the questions Wendy asked are display questions rather than referential ones. Diana did not comment on this activity.

Activity 2

The next activity was a discussion of things the students can do to stay healthy. Wendy gave the students two minutes to discuss ways to stay healthy, and later asked them to share one of their answers with the class. The five positive features were continuously carried on here. Without limiting them to standard answers, many students wanted to share their ideas of the ways to stay healthy (see the photo in Figure 5.9 below), and they appeared to have many ideas. Some of these went beyond the textbook, such as 'keep smiling', 'Don't eat junk food'.



Figure 5.9 Wendy's discussion activity in O3

In this lesson Wendy did not explain sentence-by-sentence when she presented the dialogue, just as Diana had not. Diana's students stated that they can comprehend from 30 to 100 per cent of the reading. Wendy's students stated that their comprehension of the dialogue was 100 per cent. That is, Wendy's students may not need to rely on the teacher's grammar-translation.

Commentary

This activity involves personalised questions with a primary focus on communicating meanings. It is a discussion activity; therefore, the design itself fits the criteria of communicative approaches. Evaluated by Littlewood's framework, it tends to be Box 4, 'structured communication activity', rather than Box 5, because the discussion is carefully structured. In reality, the extent of the involvement in interaction seemed high, although it was still unclear to me what language they were using. In addition, there was no attention drawn to form and clearly a production. The first two activities took 15 (9+6) minutes with the students' exchanging opinions, sharing ideas without form-focused instruction from the teacher.

5.4.2.2 Continued loss of focus in role play and discussion

For the role-play, groups chose from the two roles, and would be paired with students from another group who played the other role. They were required to discuss the actions to match the lines. In the dialogue, there are a lot of back channels, for expressing feelings, such as:

Oh, my! Umm...Yuck! OK.OK. Oh, no! Come on. All right.

Before leaving her students to practise, Wendy gave them a clear demonstration of the intonations. The students were observed saying the lines of the dialogue (in L2) while doing some actions to match the meaning. The students acted similarly to well-trained soldiers; their actions were unified. The key point should be active discussions with the target language, but this was missing. According to Wendy, she stipulated that one member in each group took the role of a leader automatically. This explains why the students' actions were unified, and they did not even need to negotiate for "actions". Two minutes was allowed for preparation and presentation took one minute. The feedback from Wendy included correcting form, e.g. 'I am afraid of **seeing** (stressed) a doctor', and giving more points for unified actions, active actions and loud voice.

Nevertheless, even with drawbacks, this was still Wendy's students' favourite activity, according to the interviewed students. Regarding their teacher's changes, they only perceived that more personalised questions were used and they liked it.

Interview with Wendy

I shared my concern with Wendy that hardly any interaction in L2 was observed,

and she pointed out that she did not observe any student interacting in English. 'Probably in Chinese', she replied. She talked about that this role-play was their best ever. She went on, 'probably because they just regroup, changed partners'. Then she shared how she regrouped the students. She believes in mixed-ability grouping. This is interesting; however, I still did not understand how she perceived the role play operationalised this way could contribute to learning. I attempted to understand Wendy's thoughts and beliefs through the interview. However, she was too busy to talk.

Commentary

Wendy did this kind of role play in the preliminary observation, and my impression was still that students were not negotiating for meaning. Teachers need to teach language needed for negotiating for meaning; for example, 'How do you show "to be honest"?' I had compiled examples of such exchanges in the lesson plan and sent them by email (Appendix 5.13). Clearly Wendy did not take this suggestion into consideration. Nonetheless, she adopted other suggestions; for example, she stressed the intonation and gave the students a clear demonstration. These are differences which Wendy made.

Improvement in developing students' ability to discuss in L2 was not yet observed in this lesson. The feature of teacher-centredness/dominance was still evident. Wendy had been seen to be making progress in inviting the students' opinions in O2, which is considered as a first step to increase students' talk. As I commented earlier, she needed to develop some activities to build up the students' habits and abilities to use L2 in group work.

Through this observation, I began to understand Wendy's classroom behaviours

better. I concluded two main features of Wendy's teaching. One was stressing form, and the other was that she often focused on something else which is less related to learning an L2. In this observation, the first feature was missing, but the second feature was evident. One example is when she gave the feedback on the students' role play (see above). Another example is regarding discussion activities which Wendy usually employed. In Interviews 2 and 3, I asked about her observation on the discussion among the students. In Interview 2 she replied that 'I think they did that individually'. In Interview 3, she stipulated that they only use Chinese. With more understanding of Wendy's practice, I came up with an interpretation that discussion, for her, meant 'cooperative learning', which, on her understanding, applied to any subject rather than being language specific. However, in communicative approaches, 'cooperative learning' involves interaction in the target language, and meaning is negotiated within the interaction.

5.4.3 Ken

Although encouraged by witnessing his students' engagement and liking of communicative tasks in O2, the factor of time discouraged Ken from carrying out his plan to prepare tasks with some easier parts for slow learners. Ken stated that he was extremely busy those days; he did not even prepare lesson plans, let alone reviewing the handouts on communicative approaches and design communicative activities. The extra jobs for the MOE Teaching and Curriculum Advisory Team added to his already rather full schedule and occupied his break time at school when he usually prepared for lessons. To make things worse, Ken had a serious flu for over a month. The observation and the following workshop were therefore postponed. Under such circumstances, Ken was observed

returning to more familiar ways of teaching and revealed his beliefs in a structural syllabus.

The topic of Lesson 8 is related to the weather and four seasons. The dialogue and the reading provide the input for learning how to describe the weather to a foreigner, and learning the clothes and activities which are often related to different weathers. The goal set by the textbook compiler is to enable students to talk about the weather and their perception of it to foreigners. All the student participants studied English before year 7, and the weather, four seasons and 12 months are commonly taught to primary school children.

5.4.3.1 Return to more familiar ways of teaching

The first thing the students did was to rearrange seats to sit in group. After every student had a copy of the worksheet, Ken quickly reminded the students that they had looked at the vocabulary of the four seasons and 12 months in the last lesson. Then he asked them to complete the first activity on the worksheet (Appendix 5.14), that is, filling in the corresponding months to the seasons. This individual activity took approximately ten minutes. While the students were doing this activity, Ken was cutting up some materials for a later activity. When checking answers, Ken asked the students what the months are in each season in Chinese, and asked the students to spell the months. Few students answered. The activity was wrapped up with repetition after the teacher.

The second activity was to answer nine questions related to months and seasons; many of them were personalised. For example, 'What is your favorite season?'. The rule of 'in + month' was stressed here both in Ken's words and on

the top of the worksheet. Ken asked the first question, 'When is your birthday?' A student answered. Ken provided an example answer and asked the students to write their own answer on their worksheet. Then the students interviewed group members. Within two minutes of the student-centred activity, some students used Chinese for negotiation for meaning. Some students seemed to interview one person, and then started chatting. Then Ken practised the question pattern (e.g. When is a student's birthday, S1?) and its answer orally with them. This mode was applied to the next two questions. Q5 to Q8 were related to facts, for example, 'What holiday do we celebrate in December?' The class answered these questions in chorus with many cases of speaking Chinese for 'Christmas', 'New Year', for example. This activity proceeded for 13 minutes.

Commentary:

The procedure is similar to what Ken did in the preliminary observation, when he explained the questions and answers about self (described in 5.1.4.1). The main difference is that there were interviews with peers this time. This lesson did not continue the progress which Ken had made from the previous lesson; he seemed to have reverted to his familiar ways of teaching. Inspecting the data of how the time was spent, it did not seem efficient.

5.4.3.2 Revealing belief in a structural syllabus

The third activity was showing the students pictures of clothes in PowerPoint slides, and the students repeated after Ken. Then they completed the four sentences in the worksheet. One example is:

I wear _____ in summer.

Ken drew a student from name sticks to read the sentence with the answer. The activity finished with repetition after the teacher. The fourth activity was conducted like the third one, and the only difference is that the category of clothes was replaced by the adjectives regarding the weather. Finally, in Activity 5, the students wrote about their favourite season, referring to these guidelines in the first line:

Why? What do you wear? What can you do? What is the weather like?

One minute before the class finished, Ken played the 'Big wind blows' game. Ken handed the small pieces of paper, with pictures of different weathers, which he cut earlier. Ken asked the students to ask him 'What is the weather like?' When he answered 'It is sunny', the students who had a picture related to it should stand up and follow Ken going around the classroom. When he said, 'I want to go home', the students needed to go back to the seat. The fun part is to see who would be the last.

The students in the interview said that they liked this game. When asked how this activity can help them, they responded: knowing vocabulary, working as a team and moving around. It was their favourite activity for the lesson.

In the post-observation interview with Ken, I shared my concern that most time was spent on reviewing old knowledge. He understood that the students had learnt these nouns and adjectives when they were primary school students, and he asserted that this was the reason why the students did not seem interested in this class. However, he did not consider this in planning this class. He did not notice that the preset goal in the textbook aims for higher level than the materials

for primary school students. In contrast, his students understood that ‘the dialogue is richer in content and has more vocabulary’ (Interview 3).

Commentary

This lesson structure is similar to the PPP procedure. For example, in Activity 2, Ken introduced the meaning of the questions, and asked the students to write down their answers, followed by practising with peers. In the PPP procedure, analogous to a weak form of TBLT, a task can be situated in the last production stage. However, Activity 5 does not constitute a task, as it is very structured without room for choosing language freely.

A clear pattern could be found in Ken’s presentation of form. He often started with a single form, that is, vocabulary in this case, presented one at a time, never mixed with other categories of vocabulary. This may imply Ken believes learning L2 is to accumulate form piece by piece, and should follow the principle of ‘from simple to complicate’ (Ken, Interview 3). This is congruent with a structural syllabus (Wilkins, 1976), which is the foundation for the Grammar-Translation and audiolingual methods (Ellis, 1993).

Ken’s PCK especially in the understanding of what his students’ understand did not seem sufficient. There is no intention here to criticise Ken’s lesson for featuring more FonFs mode. More traditional FonFs and communicative approaches can be aligned and utilised together for their specific functions. However, as mentioned earlier, the form Ken taught may be familiar to the students already. Time could have spent on practising communication, as the goal of this lesson is for students to exchange information about the weather with a foreign friend, the harder part for the students needing more practice.

Within already limited time, time should spend more wisely on more difficult parts for the students. In the interview, the students stated that they were willing to do such practice.

Ken still did not understand that a variety of communicative activities do not need much time to design. He commented that he did not have time to design communicative lessons. As I always held the stance that this research should not add the teachers' already-heavy burden, I had shown some practical examples in Workshop 3, but Ken had not been able to attend. I asked him whether he had read my examples, which were sent to him by email earlier. He replied with an embarrassed smile, 'I didn't read them'. However, it had clearly taken Ken considerable time collecting the photos for making the PowerPoint slides. I showed him how some of his activities could be designed to be more communicative with less preparation time. I also quickly showed him some examples of communicative activities which can be designed without much preparation.

5.4.4 Workshop 4

In this workshop, I scheduled the discussion of two case studies responding to my observations that all the teachers still lacked practitioner knowledge to include communicative elements in their teaching. I thought using cases in papers for studying would be a good idea, given that my role was not assigned by any authorities. We may feel more comfortable in commenting on others' cases. In addition, I prepared some tips for motivating low-proficiency, poorly motivated students from Lindstromberg's (2004) book, especially for Ken. However, he was unable to attend this workshop again. The evaluation of

objectives achieved in this workshop, in terms of the attendance of Wendy and Diana only, is summarised in Table 5.23 below:

Table 5.23 The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 4

Achieved: ✓ Not/hardly achieved: X Partly achieved: Δ

No	Objectives in Workshop 4	
1	To understand and help teachers to understand their beliefs	✓
2	To share the teacher's experience/experiments (the reflective cycle)	✓
3	To report students' feedback form interviews	✓
4	To present another variation of tasks with examples	✓
5	To discuss two case studies	✓
6	To make plans for the next lesson	X

I combined the first three objectives in the handout. I highlighted the functions of personalised questions in teacher talk, using Diana's work as example. The interpretation activities which I presented included input-enrichment activities and structured input (SI) tasks. The definitions of these activities, theories which back up them and examples were provided systematically. The examples of SI tasks may be regarded as particularly useful since it demonstrates the future tense, the grammar point in upcoming Lesson 9. Earlier I planned to show them the activities of Lesson 8, which I had designed as examples of communicative activities or tasks. However, time did not allow us to do so.

Next we discussed two case studies from a research paper: Deng and Carless (2009) described and evaluated a Chinese EFL teacher's two teaching activities. The first activity was a role play of a weather report. After demonstration of a weather report from their teacher, the students were asked to practise in pairs, and later present the report in front of the class. There was also an excerpt of transcription showing how the teacher kept correcting students' mistakes during

their report. After reading a case, we had a discussion with the following three preset questions:

Discussion:

1. How communicative is this activity?
2. Any recommendations to Rose or her activity?
3. What do you think her students felt about this activity?

All the teachers (including John) stated that it is a low communicative activity. Diana and Wendy suggest letting the students create their own report through discussion. They did not think the students would like it. However, no teachers pointed out the key point, which was that there was no new information for the students to communicate. I drew their attention to the authors' commentary which suggests creating some information gap to push students to interact. Another negative feature in this case is that the teacher frequently corrected her student's error on form when they giving the presentation. Only John noticed this point. I used this as an example to show them the concept of the development of interlanguage.

The second case is a guessing game which has higher level of communicativeness because there is some information gap. We had an active discussion and generated some more ideas for teaching. I believe the case studies had some influence on their practice as can be seen in the following (fourth) observation.

5.5 The teachers' practitioner knowledge development in the fourth research cycle

The fourth observations took place on around 30th December as scheduled, when it was near the end of the semester in the order of Diana, Ken and Wendy.

5.5.1 Diana

Wendy was an observer with me. Diana's students sat in groups as last time. Diana started Lesson 9, titled 'What are you going to do tomorrow?' In terms of form structure, it introduces the future tense; in terms of topic, it involves students to explore selves and their talents, and think of their future careers. Here Diana used authentic materials and a structured-input activity for teaching the form.

5.5.1.1 The use of authentic materials

Followed the textbook, the first activity was a warm-up activity to talk about the talents of five famous people, e.g. Lady Gaga and YoYo Ma, who are well-known locally and internationally for their striking talents. Diana asked the students to read out the title and make a prediction about this lesson, as the following excerpt shows:

T: According to this title, what is this lesson about?

S: *Chinese* (something will happen in the future).

T: Yes, how do you know that? What is the key word?

S: tomorrow.

T: YES. Very good.

Next Diana asked the students to discuss about these celebrities including their names, jobs and talents for one minute. The students were discussing actively in their L1. Meanwhile, she wrote something on the blackboard:

name / job / talent

This main procedure was: firstly Diana surveyed the students' discussion results by asking: 'How many of the famous people do you recognise?' Chinese was heard when they replied 'two', 'three', etc. Diana did not do anything to respond the students' answers in Chinese. Next, Diana introduced these celebrities covering the areas of names, jobs and talents. This lasted for 20 minutes.

The ways to introduce different people were various: playing the music videos from the Internet, or showing information collected from WiKi website. In between, she supplemented the vocabulary, such as 'cello' and 'host'. The students appeared very excited when they watched the music videos of Lady Gaga. I observed them laughing as they concentrated on the video. The introduction was wrapped up with checking the students' understandings of these people's jobs and talents.

Next, Diana distributed the small whiteboards and asked the students to write what their group members are good at on them, but didn't explain how. Some students were observed asking the question in their L1. After six minutes, the students were required to put their small whiteboards on the blackboard. Then Diana read aloud the sentences from the small whiteboards to the whole class, and checked for logic of the meaning (i.e. good at sleeping) and syntax correctness (good at *study). When she had some interaction with students, Diana rewarded the students who had contributions with points.

The student interviews revealed that the first thing they recalled was Lady Gaga, and they still felt very excited when interviewed, saying that playing music videos in class makes the class much more interesting. They also developed some ideas from that. Firstly, singing an English song can replace oral tests; one student expressed her feeling that it is easier to learn English from songs. Secondly, they suggested using movies in teaching because they show how English is used in real life.

In terms of the peer's view, Wendy thought that playing videos is good for raising the students' interests, and thus enhance learning. She also appreciated Diana's idea of getting the students to investigate their classmates' talents. The aim of this lesson is to encourage students to think about their own talents through learning about the talents of famous people. Diana was on the same track with the aim, so was Wendy.

Commentary

Diana started this lesson with a very good move- asking the learners to make a prediction about the lesson from the title: 'What are you going to do tomorrow?'. The student's attention was on the meaning instead of the form, the future tense. Diana's next move was also a good one; she arranged group work for discussion to put heads together for something which may not be familiar to an individual student. In addition, a significant breakthrough for Diana was using authentic materials as supplements to the textbook this time.

I suggest extending this activity with real language use: letting the students share their thoughts after watching or after reading the supplementary information, instead of letting them passively watching the MVs. I was sure that

the students must have some feelings in mind that they wish to share. I took the opportunity to confirm this idea with the interviewed students:

I: When you were watching the MVs, did you have some thoughts in mind?

S: I want to be like Lady Gaga.

I: Do you want to share your thoughts with your class?

S: Yes, Lady Gaga 很性感 (Chinese, very sexy)

I: Can you say that in English? No problem?

S: She is SO sexy!

I: See? That's it! No problem.

I planned to suggest to the teachers that the students should report their group's talents to the class instead of their teacher doing it. I therefore checked with the students if they were willing to do so, and they responded positively.

5.5.1.2 Experiencing a structured-input activity for teaching form

Activity 2 shows Diana's uptake of starting from meaning for teaching form, i.e. the future tense. To start with, Diana asked the students:

What date is today?

What date was it yesterday?

How about tomorrow?




And then she elicited that New Year's Day would come in two days, and asked, 'What do you want to do on New Year's Day?' and 'What do you plan to do on New Year's Day?'. After asking the students from each group, she wrote their answers on the board:

(a name) will sleep
will watch TV
play computer
stay on-line...

She wrote six verb phrases on the board, and two 'will's before the first two phrases; the written presentation looked like a structured input (SI) activity. Next Diana applied a guessing game to create an opportunity for her students to use the targeted single form structure. She asked them to guess what she would do on New Year's Day. They needed to ask her a question starting with 'Will you'. The students were very eager to take a guess and kept asking their teacher the question. After a few runs of error attempts, one group got it right, and they showed very proud faces. Diana did not forget to reward the winning groups with points.

Commentary

This activity was operationalised in a similar way to an SI activity. There was primacy of meaning. The topic was related to the teacher and the students themselves. Only one grammatical point, i.e. 'will', was chosen at a time. Merely one criticism is that each sentence as written input should be presented in a complete structure to make the form more salient. That is, a subject is followed by a 'will' and a verb phrase. Diana stated that she thought of it, but her concern was time. I pointed out that she could write a simple symbol such as a smiling face to represent a person, as shown below. She agreed.

(a name) **will** sleep
 **will** watch TV
 **will** play computer
 **will** stay on-line...

Diana created a guessing game with a function of exchanging information, a truly communicative exercise, as the next step of an SI activity should be (Lee & VanPatten, 2003).

In this observation, Diana was more competent in control of students' classroom behaviours when doing group work. She used scoring more smoothly to invite students' further efforts to respond to some questions, and the students responded to it actively. The scoring process also helped her to control the class.

5.5.2 Ken

In this observation, Ken also started Lesson 9. Diana and Wendy joined me as observers. Ken also used guessing games and authentic materials.

5.5.2.1 The use of guessing games

To begin the class, Ken let the students shout out some names of the first 100 famous people in Taiwan. Later, he showed the students PowerPoint slides with some photos of those people, which were covered with a shade for his students to guess who the famous people are. They did so by asking questions with the two target structures written on the blackboard:

Is he/she (adjective)? Is he/she a (noun)?

Most students were very excited to take a guess in a mixture of L1 and L2. The examples of using their L1 include 'artist', 'American' and 'live in Taiwan'. Ken ignored it for more cases, but occasionally he used recast. For example:

S: 住台灣嗎? (Chinese, live in Taiwan)

T: No, he doesn't live in Taiwan.

However, he kept reminding his students to use the two target structures. The atmosphere in the classroom was lively during the approximately eight minutes of the activity.

The second activity was 'Guess who I am'. Ken nominated a student to demonstrate with him. Ken took out a photo-copy of a famous person, and stuck it on his forehead. Ken kept asking several questions with the same structure: '*Is he/she good at (v-ing)?*' until he answered it right. This activity on the worksheet is shown in Figure 5.10 below. They are required to use all the verbs on the worksheet to ask questions, and check any of the three slots (yes, no, no idea) according to their peers' responses.

Who am I?

Ask your partner "Is he/she good at V-ing?" to find the answer

Description	Yes	No	No idea
sing			
dance			
direct			
play music			
play basketball			
cook			
write			
act			
speak			

Figure 5.10 The 'guessing who I am' activity

Five minutes had passed before the students proceed to asking and answering, which took another five minutes. At the beginning, most of the students were engaged in this procedure, and were heard using the target questions. Over time, they became less focused.

After the second activity, Ken drew the students' attention to the worksheet, where Ken related the famous people to the students themselves. Ken added a missing-word sentence to the worksheet, so that his students could think about their own talents and express their "wishes":

Describe yourself!

I am good at _____. I want to be like _____ in the future.

In the post-lesson interview, the teacher's intention to let the students think of their own talents and what they like to do in the future was identified by the interviewed students. Moreover, the students enjoyed these guessing activities very much, and believe that they can practise using English this way. Furthermore, to address my concern of the over use of L1, I asked about their willingness to answer in English. They showed positive attitudes.

Diana and Wendy both perceived the merits of this activity. Diana commented that this activity allows the students to learn about famous people in English, and this leads to think about their own talents. Wendy held similar views.

Commentary

Activity 1 was perceived as a pre-task for the 'Guess who I am' activity. Through guessing, students were interacting with their teachers, with some information gaps. However, there are drawbacks; within ten minutes of time period, only two

target structures were used. They seem overly easy to those year 8 students. Even so, the students were observed to communicate in L1. In the interview with Ken, I asked him about his attitude towards the students' speaking in Chinese. He stated that this was his first time doing an activity which enabled the students ask him questions. This leads me to believe that Ken did not think about this problem.

Activity 2 is an example of integrating form practice with a game where the students were communicating. In its design, meaning was given in primary place, and there were some gaps providing the need to interact. Therefore, it conforms to Littlewood's Box 3, communicative language practice activity. In its process, the focus remained on meaning, and interaction in L2 was observed. However, the communicativeness was counteracted by the insufficient use of L2 in interaction.

To comment on the third activity, Ken added a section to his worksheet where his students could express their "wishes". This may cater to the students' desire, as expressed by one of Diana's students, who wanted to be like Lady Gaga after watching the music video. These famous, successful people are envisaged to be the students' role models. Ken obviously understood this.

5.5.2.2 Using authentic materials

For the fourth activity, Ken played the video of Career Day in a children's school with lovely pictures of children dressed to represent different careers; Figure 5.11 below shows an example. Before watching, he told the students the purpose of watching this: to tell how many occupations there are in the video.

The students concentrated on this video to find the answer. Surprisingly, one student provided the correct answer-- 29 occupations! However, some students also surprised me by shouting out numbers in Chinese when they replied to the teacher's question.

Wendy, Diana and I all thought this video very lovely. Diana also pointed out that the students were focused on watching the video.



Figure 5.11 An example of the Career Day video

Commentary

Overviewing this lesson, there are three striking features: the topic and materials of the real world, a meaning-focused activity- guessing games to practice or teach the structure and the use of some authentic materials. These features, which have been pointed out in the literature to be interesting to learners, were observed to be the case in Ken's class.

However, there was still some room for Ken to improve his classroom management skills. When we discussed about using assigning scores as a strategy to readjust the students' behaviours, Ken stated that it was out of his intuition that those students did not care about group scores. However, the first

questionnaire data show the opposite is true and also in the previous interviews. Ken seemed to ignore this information. This time I told him privately about his students' feedback regarding appeals to embrace group competition. Assigning scores to increase students' motivation for competition and to control their behaviour were also strategies suggested by Diana and Wendy, who both observed his lesson.

Assigning a group leader is considered as an improvement in Ken's group work. However, group leaders could have been given more duties, for example, to encourage group members to contribute. In addition, he still needed to improve his time management.

In this observed class, Ken seemed to regain some confidence. Ken observed that the students' engagement was raised, especially for some students of higher English ability levels, who tended to sleep in class before. In his reflection, he realised that giving more challenging activities could involve those students more.

5.5.3 Wendy

The goals for this lesson were to review the reading and finish Lesson 8. Wendy employed a task cycle without awareness of its potential to promote communicative approaches, and revealed some features of her practice that had the effect of discouraging students' interaction in L2. Diana was the only peer to observe Wendy.

5.5.3.1 Unawareness of the potential for communicative approaches

Wendy firstly reviewed the reading, which is a description of the four seasons of a year in four paragraphs. She checked how many details the students could remember by asking questions. For this purpose, most questions that Wendy asked were display ones.

Following this was the 'listen and draw' activity. For the first step, one student in each group opened the book and read the text to the rest of group, who were required to listen to the speaker and draw what they have heard on the whiteboard. The students' behaviours observed in the first minute include: in one group, a student read, and another student wrote down the sentence; four groups were reading, listening and drawing; one group did not start. The students were observed using L1 in interaction even for easy phrases for their level, such as for, 'draw a tree', 'here', without correction from their teacher. I planned to discuss this phenomenon with the teacher and students later. It took two and a half minutes to finish the first step for Part 1- spring.

The next step was showing the students' drawings on the blackboard, and the teacher commented on them. Wendy gave her opinion, mostly based on her own subjective preferences, with the exception of only one factual detail. Here is an example of her comments: 'Personal opinion, I'll give Group 1 a point. Also, I like this happy sunshine; give that group a point'. A snapshot with the score board shown in the upper right corner is provided in Figure 5.12 below:



Figure 5.12 A photo of Wendy commenting on the students' drawing

The third step was reciting the text with the book closed. Half of the groups could do this successfully. Then these three steps were repeated for other three seasons.

Diana thought this 'listen and draw' activity is helpful to check students' understanding of the reading text. Also, asking students to take turns reading the content and drawing allows division of work in class, a view shared with the students in the interview.

The students stated that they like this activity, since it could help their listening and speaking skills as well. How it can promote speaking puzzled me so they explained: when they read, they need to make sure they are understood. They need to be careful about the pronunciation and the keyword. This is exactly conformed to what the interaction hypothesis and the output hypothesis have to say about the function of interaction.

The students suggested that they should have done this activity before they were familiar with the text. This way the students who draw can only rely on the speaker rather than ignoring the speaker and drawing from their own memory. They also suggested as an alternative composing a new text revised from the original text.

Commentary

The 'listen and draw' activity has the potential to be an information-gap task. In terms of the design, the information to be transmitted is its meaning rather than form. Only one student holds the information, and reads it to his/her group who need to draw what that student tells them to, which allows communication to happen. The goal of the activity is for the drawing to conform to the information communicated. Therefore, it conforms to the three criteria of a task.

Although in the process, the focus was on meaning, the extent of interaction could be improved in all the three steps. For Step 1, the students should have been reminded to use L2 to interact. For Step 2 when the teacher was commenting, she could have invited her students' opinions. In Step 3, reciting the text, there was no element of interaction. Only Step 1 gave rise to some interaction among the students, and it took six minutes. The less communicative Steps 2 and 3 took twelve minutes. This analysis shows that the proportion of time devoted to near-communicative and non-communicative events is one to two.

In contrast to her students' perception, Wendy was not aware that the 'listen and draw' activity has the potential to be communicative. In the interview, when asked the purpose or the function of this activity, Wendy replied that it was to

help the students to memorise the text. If Wendy had known that the 'listen and draw' provides information gaps between the students, she could have put this information gap activity in earlier schedule, as her students suggested.

5.5.3.2 Features of Wendy's practice discouraging interaction in L2

At near the end of this TD programme, Wendy still ignored the importance of interacting in L2 for her students. If the teacher does not instigate a "rule" to use the L2, it is natural for students not to do so. I found other reasons for the students not using L2 in this observation. One of those is time pressure from Wendy. In this interview with the students, I said I noticed them using L1 in interaction even for easy phrases, and asked again about their willingness to interact in English. They stated that they were willing to try, but were discouraged by limited time. As mentioned earlier, Wendy preferred to have group activities, and for most of the cases, the rule was often that the group which finished first got the points. She usually chose who to answer by the speed of students' raising hands, as her students mentioned this several times. Wendy kept reminding the students of the time, counting down to push students to finish quickly. This discouraged students from making attempts to practise using the target language and encouraged them to use L1 to communicate since it is the quickest way to finish a "task". The students have developed this strategy under such a situation. Other strategies include letting the members with higher English ability do the job alone.

To summarise the improvements which Wendy had made up to then:

- Extending the progress from O3, Wendy did not remind her students of grammar rules, neither did she stop for grammar instruction when the

students were interacting in the target language.

- The use of an information gap activity although she was unaware.

5.5.4 Workshop 5

The fifth workshop followed promptly after O4 on 3rd January 2014. Ken was absent for the workshop again because of his busier schedule. However, Ken and I had had a longer session of post-discussion.

Some objectives for the workshop, such as the first three, had been covered. The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 5 is summarised in Table 5.24:

Table 5.24 The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 5

Achieved: ✓ Not/hardly achieved: X Partly achieved: Δ

No	Objectives in Workshop 5	
1	To understand and help teachers to understand their beliefs	✓
2	To share the teacher's experience/experiments (the reflective cycle)	✓
3	To report students' feedback form interviews	✓
4	To encourage interaction in L2 (reactive to the observations)	X
5	To show more examples of communicative activities	Δ

As in previous workshops, the first three objectives were combined, showing the summaries of the classroom activities with photos to refresh the teachers' memory, the peers' and the students' feedback. When we discussed the idea that Wendy's 'Listen and draw' activity had the potential to become a communicative task, Diana asked Wendy whether this was her intention. Firstly, Wendy admitted that she had not taken sufficient time to plan that activity. This pushed Wendy to reflect further. She shared with us that she thought about the

procedures of the activity, but rarely reflected on the rationale behind it.

Since the teachers had not been aware of the importance of interaction in L2, I developed a strategy during this research cycle: noting down some cases in which L1 was used rather than L2 in interaction, then asking in the student interviews about their willingness to try interacting in L2 for those cases, and then giving feedback on that to the teachers. I also illustrated a scenario when I asked the interviewed students of Ken's to translate orally their Chinese, which they had used in Ken's class into English. The students could not say promptly how to say 'live in Taiwan' in English, even though this phrase should be easy for the year 8 students. Then, I caught Wendy's facial expression showing surprise. In order to address this, I pointed out that if the students do not use L2, they will forget it. I believed this event helped them reflect.

Later, I drew their attention to Wendy's students' comments on the 'Listen and draw' activity, which conformed to what the interaction and the output hypotheses have to say about the function of interaction. Thus I took this opportunity to connect the students' feedback to these relevant theories. I reiterated that interaction for production will trigger cognitive processes that contribute accuracy rather than fluency, according to the output hypothesis. This reiteration was to reassure those teachers that communicative approaches do not merely focus on fluency. Then Wendy asked a question regarding interaction in L2:

In last discussion, we talked about an alternative of the 'Listen and Draw' activity, that is, let the students illustrate a season from their drawing. For such free production, is it accuracy or fluency that we should focus?

I shared my opinion which has drawn on the literature about providing feedback

(discussed in 3.2.3). I believed that this was the moment for Wendy to start reflecting on whether or not there is a conflict between accuracy and fluency. As I observed earlier, she often highlighted accuracy by continually reminding her students to watch out for grammar before they spoke.

My plan was to cover all types of tasks to accomplish the programme. Since it was the second last workshop, I showed them another type of tasks, i.e. consciousness-raising (CR) activities/tasks. In addition, I recapped activities to carry out: role-play, information gap and discussion, and introduced rapidly two new types of tasks, i.e. reasoning and ranking. Finally, I strongly recommended they read examples of how to design those tasks in the handouts. For the teachers who need to follow textbooks, these examples are very helpful. Later, I stipulated that they must read these examples, which may help them organise their lesson plans more logically, as revealed in the following observations.

5.6. The teachers' practitioner knowledge development in the fifth research cycle

The final observations (5) were carried out on the 8th and 9th of January 2014. The interval between them and the fourth observations (on 30th December) was very short. These were the latest days they could offer since the final exam would take place on 16th and 17th January; the teachers needed to prepare students for the exam.

5.6.1 Ken

Diana observed this class with me. This was a lesson for Lesson 9, with a target form of the future tense. Here Ken showed his breakthrough and attempts to assign scores in doing activities, including the information gap and the interview activities.

5.6.1.1 Information gap activity

BINGO game

Ken asked the group leaders to approach him for the worksheets. On their worksheets were 4x4 grids and a list of words with troublesome pronunciation, e.g. 'were', 'will', and some condensed forms such as 'we'll' prepared for the BINGO game (Appendix 5.15). Quickly he asked the students to repeat these words after him. Ken gave them four minutes to choose from the list to fill in the sixteen slots. Ken started to write group names on the blackboard for assigning scores.

Each group took turns to shout a word. Eventually, his students were engaged in listening to the word being called; no students were sleeping. Another four minutes later, Ken checked how many students had got 'BINGO', and gave the group which had the most people with 'BINGO' more points. Some students asked to play it again (in Chinese) when the game was finished.

Commentary

According to Ken, his aim was to help his students distinguish the sounds of these words. BINGO is a good game to serve this purpose because the students cannot play it without identifying the word being called. This is an example of

employing a game to address form, one type of a communicative activity.

Information gap activity

For the information gap activity, Ken designed two versions of worksheets, for Student A and Student B. The target was to investigate the activities which some people will do in a certain time, by asking the 'will' questions. Ken integrated some popular events in Taiwan, such as to see the new-born panda. He gave very clear instructions, but forgot to draw all the students' attention before doing it and one group at the far corner was chatting. Later that group asked Ken how to do it and Ken explained to them. Four minutes later, some students started to copy from other students' answers. Another two minutes past, Ken checked the results by asking questions such as: 'Will John clean his bedroom this winter vacation?' The students answered in chorus.

Diana held positive attitudes towards this activity as she liked the idea of using popular language or events, e.g. the new-born panda, to design the information gap activity. She believed that the students would like it.

Commentary:

The design of this information gap activity is inclined to Box 3, communicative language practice, where the learners work with a predictable range of language as a basis for information exchange with their peers. In the process, the students used the target language (Will...?) to convey information.

Several improvements could have been made. Ken should have drawn all the students' attention before he explained the new activity. One main rule for information gap activities is not to show their information to their partner. Ken

should have told the students this rule and reminded them to follow it. Also, it could be considered too long to use six minutes to for students to ask their partner ten questions with the same structure, 'Will ...?' to fill in ten slots.

5.6.1.2 The interview activity

For the final activity, an interview, the students had to fill in nine slots with their plans/goals, as shown in the worksheets:

My plans/setting goals:

1. List three things that you're going to do today.

--	--	--

2. List three things that you're going to do this week.

--	--	--

3. List three things that you're going to do this month.

--	--	--

Ken allowed five minutes for students to do so. When Ken observed one group doing well, he told the class that the group just won a point and the reason for that. Some students finished it very quickly, and either started the interview or started chatting; others were struggling with thinking about their plans. One student filled in all his slots in Chinese; he did not ask for his peer's help. Another student filled in all the slots with 'sleep'. Ken did nothing but waiting. Cooperation was not stressed nor mentioned by him.

The students then interviewed three friends for those three questions. Near the end of the eleven minute period, the students did not seem to engage in this interview activity. Next, Ken asked volunteers to report. Immediately a boy put his hand up and seriously reported what his friends' plans were. The rest of class

did not pay much attention to what he said.

The students in the interview pointed out that they would have been more interested in this activity if it could have been more challenging, and suggested that they also interview people from other groups.

Commentary

Two features in this interview activity are in line with communicative approaches: exchange of information/meaning and personalised topic. However, too many questions with the same grammatical structure make it similar to drills for form. In terms of interaction and participation, some students used English to understand their classmates' plans.

Ken continued trying out new communicative activities. He broke through his group work management skills. He started assigning scores, as all the observers suggested after O4. Ken reflected on his first time doing this:

Assigning scores surely has effects on students' performance. Three girls, whose English is good, used to often sleep in English class, because they already learnt what I was teaching. Today they involved in the activities, and even volunteered to answer.

Ken noticed that students' engagement had improved. He further pointed out that 'Using activities, especially for the challenge ones, instead of giving lectures gave students motives to participate and made them awake'. However, assigning scores takes skills, the teacher needs to know when and how to reward the students. It takes time for teachers to develop practical knowledge (PK) of assigning scores. Wendy displayed her skills of assigning scores in all these aspects.

5.6.2 Wendy

Almost the first thing Wendy asked students to do was to speak as much English as possible. The more English they speak, the more awards they will receive. Diana was in the classroom observing. This lesson shows Wendy's persistent beliefs in PPP and her starting to understanding that less control creates more learning opportunities.

5.6.2.1 Persistent beliefs in PPP

Continuing Lesson 9 from the previous lesson, this lesson started with grammar instruction and drills. Wendy gave the students a clear introduction of the simple future tense, and then led them do grammar exercise for the usage of 'will' for 16 minutes. There were four parts of the exercise, one of each example shown below:

I Complete the sentences

I/buy/a bike => I _____

II Change the sentences according to the hint

I will write my biology homework. => Will I _____?

III Complete the sentences with question words

_____ will you travel to Paris? I will travel there next month.

IV Write your own answers

Will you be a teacher in the future?

Commentary

A grammar exercise for practising the sentence pattern of 'will' is form-focused, inclined to Box 1 in Littlewood's framework. This may reflect a belief that with such practice, students would be confident doing the following activities, i.e. the PPP procedures.

Activity 2 Interview and share

Continuing linking this structure to personal relevant matter, the next activity was to interview the group about what they would do at different time frames, and Figure 5.13 shows the first three examples (18 sentences in total). The students were required to write down the sentences on the small whiteboard, and pass it to the group next to them, one sentence at a time. Perhaps the students had a habit of "rushing to finish", as some of them skipped the procedure of interviewing, and went straight to writing on the whiteboard without interaction. In between, Wendy reminded them to use English, and more English was heard than the previous lessons.

Who willtomorrow/ next weekend / in winter vacation / during Chinese New Year?

1. _____ will _____ tomorrow.
2. _____ will _____ next Saturday.
3. _____ will _____ tonight.

Figure 5.13 Examples of the interview questions

When they passed the board, they could see what people in other groups would do, which is a fun thing for teenagers. After the whiteboard travelled around several groups, they were put onto the blackboard in the front of the classroom. Wendy randomly chose a name and asked who could tell her what the person

would do. Several students put up their hands in the air, showing their teacher that they knew the answer and wanted to be nominated.

Diana commented that this activity created mutual learning by asking other classmates' planned activities of their winter vacation. They can notice or learn more activities from their classmates do. Also, asking students' plans for their winter vacation is related to their life experience. Diana also provided suggestions when she observed that some of Wendy's students skipped the step of interviewing for speeding to complete the task of writing the results on the white board. She noted on her feedback sheet:

Remind students to finish the activity of 'interview group members' first (or give them more time to finish it). Let them write the activities on the whiteboard later. This way, students have more chances to interview group members.

Later Diana shared this view with Wendy. Wendy agreed with her, and stated that she felt supported by her peer's comments.

Commentary

The whole activity was focused on meaning without any comments on form; perhaps the usage of 'will' was easy to these students. However, there was lack of clear instructions or rules; the students rushed to finish without giving primary weight to interaction in L2. I agree with Diana's suggestions to improve this aspect.

5.6.2.2 Understanding that less control creates more learning opportunities

Wendy designed an activity to allow the students to use their imagination. On their worksheet with a title of 'What will you do with it? Will you.....?' were five items and an example of a bike (Appendix 5.16). With this example, Wendy wrote:

I will ride it.
I will use it to go to school.
I will fix it when it's broken.

The fifth item was left for the students to think of an item for other group to guess.

Firstly the students discussed things which they could do with each item. Next they presented their creativity to the class. In the post-observation discussion, Wendy expressed her excitement about what the students had done. For example, for Number 2, chopsticks, a student created the sentence: 'I will use them to pick my nose'. For Number 3, a popular artist, Show, they wrote, 'I will kiss him.' and so on. Wendy was very satisfied with their responses for Number 4, typhoon. The students wrote:

I will fight with it.
I will stay away from it.
I will dance with it.

The final step was to guess what Number 5 is. Not all the group members replied to the questions. When they guessed the answers right, everybody was thrilled, bursting into laughter.

Diana was pleased to observe this creative activity. She believes that the students can learn significantly through brainstorming and discussing.

Wendy encouraged the students from the very first step, as she said, 'the more English you use, the more points you can receive'. She stated that she had been encouraging her students to interact in English for a while, and she felt that the results were getting progressively better. She gave an example: she noticed that a couple of girls who were particularly shy started to open up.

Commentary

This activity is not only designed for practising the future tense; it also encourages students to think creatively and recycles what they have learnt. Clearly, the students also learnt new items for their peers. Wendy agreed with me in these aspects. In addition, the topics themselves were very interesting to the students. Especially a topic included a popular idol. The students were very eager to discuss something about him; the atmosphere then was very lively. Step 3 can be seen as a guessing game, the function of which was discussed in Workshop 4.

Each of these three steps involves an activity which is very student-centred. For most of the time, the students discussed and decided something on their own; they initiated questions and responded to peers' questions. The teacher transferred some of her role to the students; this way, she became a facilitator, standing by to provide prompt assistance.

5.6.3 Diana: Fully engaged in communicative activities

In the final observed lesson, Diana took a step further to have a discussion activity all through the lesson, and tried to encourage her students to use English in interaction. Wendy observed this lesson with me.

The objective was for students to discuss a plan for the upcoming winter vacation and to present it to the class later. The plan should cover:

1. When is your winter vacation?
2. What do you plan to do? Why?
3. Where are you going to go?
4. What are you going to do there?
5. Who are you going to go with?
6. How will it be?

Diana firstly gave her own example and invited a student to ask her the questions above. While listening, the students concentrated and were engaged. After that, Diana invited the students to ask her questions about this interview. A student right away asked her several questions using complete sentences. Then Diana asked questions in English to check their understanding.

Next Diana told the students to move their desks and chairs to sit face-to-face for discussion, and rewarded one group for arranging their seats the fastest, as Wendy always does. The students started to discuss and write down their own plans. When discussing, students seemed engaged, and some English was heard, but later one group started chatting in L1.

Twelve minutes later, Diana wrote the procedures on the blackboard, as shown below:

Discuss your plan
Write it down on the whiteboard
Practice reading it out
Oral report/take notes

Within the 16 minute duration, she reminded the class once to interact in English. After another three minutes, the students started practising for presenting their report (the third procedure above). Group 6 was observed organising the presentation, thinking about the details and practising cooperatively.

After the students had practised for five minutes, Diana drew their attention to her instruction of giving an oral report. She distributed a separate sheet for the students to note down the information, such as when, what and where. They could ask the presenters questions after their presentation. The sheets were to be collected by Diana for inspection. The group took turns presenting at the podium. The strategy of taking notes worked very well; the rest of students were listening and taking notes with concentration.

Wendy praised the idea of taking notes, and commented that it is a good strategy for this context, where the students often do not listen when other people give a presentation.

This was Diana's first attempt to encourage her students to use English to interact. When I tried to remind her to notice how English was used during interactions, she replied: 'I planned to reward students with points if they used English. But, I might not hear they used it'. The interviewed students claimed that Diana once asked them why they were not using English, and after their teacher's reminder, they switched to English. It shows that if the teacher reminds her students to do something, they may obey. Diana felt confident that

interaction in English can work in her class.

Commentary

In the third procedure, Diana observed some students scaffolding each other, and she felt very pleased about it. The last step, reporting, is good for training students' presentation skills and speaking skill, while taking notes for training students' listening and note-taking skills. In addition, the interaction between the presenters and the audience is a very good move; it simulates real life situations. If this type of activity is repeated, the students would develop strategies to operate it well, as Group 6 did, and the activity could proceed more efficiently in terms of time.

5.6.4. Workshop 6

Since this was the last workshop in the action research, in addition to the routine objectives, I was to present the second questionnaire and school exam results to the teachers. Also, since the teachers had noticed the importance of interaction, I planned to expand it further by providing more practical examples. In addition, I wanted to discuss a journal article which I had provided, written by a Taiwanese high school teacher, Chang (2006), who shares her own experience of using communicative approaches. However, due to the time limitation, I left the teachers to read the article. Also importantly, I wanted to hear the teachers' voices regarding how this teacher professional programme changed the way and beliefs in their teaching and their future development. The objectives and the extent of achievement is summarised in Table 5.25:

Table 5.25 The evaluation of objectives achieved in Workshop 6

Achieved: ✓ Not/hardly achieved: X Partly achieved: Δ

No	Objectives in Workshop 6	
1	Sharing the experience/experiments	✓
2	Reporting students' feedback from the second questionnaire and school exam results	✓
3	How to promote the functions of Interaction	X
4	Discussing Chang's article	Δ
5	Sharing how this teacher professional programme changes the way and beliefs in teaching and taking about future development	Δ

In these final observations, all the three teachers gave wonderful lessons which are good enough for modelling for other teachers to some points. The sequences of their lessons are well-organised. Therefore I transcribed almost all the activities they did in the observed lessons.

In this workshop, which Ken did not attend, we discussed the students' feedback from the second questionnaire and school exam results (presented in the next sections). We talked about further development in this short session. Diana and Wendy both held very positive attitudes towards the feasibility of communicative approaches in their teaching context. Later when Diana and I communicated through emails for my requirement for the final school exam results, she noted:

I'm happy to know that they made progress continuously, too. Now I try to think some activities in class. I don't worry that students will feel bored any more. I love teaching English more. Thanks a lot.

This provides evidence of Diana's continuing professional development.

5.7 Contextual factors

Contextual factors in this study are referred as the students' perceptions of their teachers' adaption of communicative approaches and school exam results, and any other things emerging during this AR. Section 5.7.1 presents themes from interview data and 2nd questionnaire in 5.7.2. 5.7.3 integrates the data from all research methods and 5.7.4 presents school exams results. Codes are used: the first interview with Diana's students, SDI1, the second interview with Wendy's students, SWI2, and so on.

5.7.1 Interviews with students

In Phase 2, focus-group interviews with three students from each class were conducted after each observation. From Section 5.2 to 5.6, the students' views are presented as they relate to the class events, therefore, here they are presented in a summarized form.

The students' perceptions of their teachers' changes are congruent with their teachers' intentions to change for most of the cases, summarized in Table 5.26 below. The exceptions often happen in Wendy's cases; for example, in O4, her students view the 'listen and draw' activity as creating plenty of learning opportunities, while Wendy had not pondered the rationale of using it. In O2, Diana's students did not mention that Diana had abandoned the Grammar-Translation method. The reason may be that group work was a more salient change. On the other hand, Ken's changes were too obvious to be neglected by his students.

Table 5.26 Students' perceptions of their teachers' changes

Observation	Ken's changes
1	group activities, discussion; brainstorming new ideas
2	group activities, task: messenger dictation
3	a game
4	guessing games
5	grouping, assigning scores, interacting with group, BINGO game, information-gap, interview activities
Observation	Wendy's changes
1	no differences
2	more active, closer to life, more group discussion
3	hardly changes, personalised questions
4	'listen and draw' activity
5	more games, starting asking students to speak English as a new rule; passing the whiteboard
Observation	Diana's changes
1	group discussion, cooperation in completing questions in worksheet
2	group activity (from 2 last time to 4 or 6 students in one group), using word cards, using magnetic whiteboard for group activities, group cooperation (information gap activity)
3	assigning scores, passing the whiteboard, more personalised question
4	face-to-face seating; playing MVs
5	starting requesting students to speak English

In relation to the parts in the class the students liked, nearly all the students stated that they liked all the changes. The most mentioned one is discussion. Wendy's students liked discussion in a group; they believed they learn more through sharing ideas with one another. Diana's students liked group discussion since they liked brainstorming ideas with classmates. Similarly, Ken's students liked it; they thought they could learn from each other through interaction. In Interview 3, Ken's students suggested having more activities for them to discuss. The only exception was when Wendy's students commented on O5. Two

students stated that the English only policy could train them to use it to convey meaning. However, one student held a more negative attitude due to the concern of his English ability.

Regarding the parts which the students dislike, they often either replied nothing, or pointed out things which did not happen in the observed classes, such as writing test sheets, doing drilling exercise, no games and lectures.

With regard to the students' recommendation or concerns, four themes emerge. Firstly, those students hoped to learn more beyond the domain of the textbook (SWI1, SDI1), they liked to be taught extra knowledge (WI3). They aimed higher; they were willing to try freer discussion. They liked discussing the answer because they liked interaction with classmates, and they could make funny sentences to amuse themselves (SWI2). After O4, I asked Ken's students what they think the teacher can do to increase their willingness to answer questions, and they responded to have a group discussion first.

It was also revealed that the students' aims were sometimes higher than their teachers thought; in response to my enquiry about the picture description activity, they told me that they were willing to try making up stories with pictures rather than saying something about the pictures, or answering their teacher's display questions. In addition, to answer my concerns regarding interaction with peers in English, they expressed their willingness to try on many occasions.

Secondly, they perceived that some communicative activities, such as games, have the potential to replace form-focused ones. For Ken's students, they wished to more activities like 'messenger dictation' and BINGO. Wendy's students further suggested that games can be used to replace grammar

instruction. They made their point clear: 'Use games to teach grammar. In order to win, our potential, imagination and abilities can be activated'. Related to this is Diana's student's suggestion that her activities which included students writing on the whiteboard, could replace worksheet exercises; this method can train their writing. Extending the experience of watching MV, Diana's students suggested that singing an English song can replace oral tests because they feel that it is easier to learn English from songs. Secondly, they suggested using movies in teaching because they show how English is used in real life. Thirdly, watching MVs made the class less rigid, which helps learning.

The third theme is related to the gain: learning and motivation. The students often believe they can learn more and be more interested in English through the new activities (SDI2). In SWI1, they stated that by asking questions, they can learn speaking and cooperation. Ken's students believe that they can be more familiar with text by carrying messages (SKI2). Wendy's students in Interview 4 perceive that the 'listen and draw' contributes to both listening and speaking abilities. The interviewed students frequently pointed out that they found the new activities fun. Ken's students like all changes and they were not bored anymore (SKI5). They suggested Ken keep these changes in the future lessons.

Fourthly, they expressed few concerns. The major concern of Wendy's students was regarding grouping. They cared about scores and fairness. They also wished Wendy could have given more response time for slow learners. Diana's students recommended not taking notes.

To conclude, students liked the class activities that have the attributes of communicative approaches. Therefore, no negative impacts on the implementation of communicative approaches were perceived from the

interviewed students.

5.7.2 Second questionnaire

The main rationale for the second questionnaire was to explore all the students' perceptions of their teachers' changes in pedagogy, and understand whether their preference changed over time (Appendix 4.2).

5.7.2.1 Students' attitudes towards the changes the teachers had made

The first question is to ask the students to recall the changes their teachers had made in this semester, and to choose from a 5-point type Likert scale of preference of the changes. They listed 12 to 19 changes in the three classes, as presented in Tables 5.27 to 5.29 in Appendix 5.17. The majority of the top five changes perceived by all the three classes are games, group work and group competition (with assigning score).

With 29 valid copies in Ken's class, more frequent changes which Ken's students perceived are games and group work with 12 responses each. The students were in favour of games with 11 of 'like very much' and 'like'. Regarding group work, however, slightly more students among the twelve held a neutral attitude than 'like'. 'Group competition' and 'group discussion' together had nine (4+2+3) responses for 'like very much' and 'like'. This may indicate that it is not group work itself that students like; rather, it is discussion with group and competition among groups that were liked by students. These two elements of group work were less used by Ken until the later part of the research cycles, and also new to Diana's students. In Diana's class, assigning scores for group competition, liked

by 11 (3+8) students, was far more liked than group work without assigning scores. Wendy's class does not reflect this phenomenon because she always included these two elements in group work.

Games were the most popular changes perceived by Wendy's students (with 12 responses for 'like'). It is worthy to note that the newest change Wendy made in those days, 'interact/talking in English' became the third popular change liked by five students close to the second most popular one, '(Drama) performance'.

To summarise, the most frequently perceived changes by all the three classes are the methods to carry out communicative approaches. Thus one can conclude that year 8 students in the research setting show their preference to these approaches. These findings are highly congruent with the interview data.

5.7.2.2 Students' perceptions of their progress

For the open-ended question which requested the students to think of any progress they have made, many expressed that they had made great progress in speaking, e.g. more confident in conveying their ideas, asking questions and taking an active role. Six students in Wendy's class, four in Diana's and two in Ken's similarly responded that they had understood grammar better. 'Learning more vocabulary' received as many responses as grammar. Students from both Ken's and Wendy's class expressed that they became loving English.

In response to being asked to tick where the students thought they had improved in seven areas, 'made some improvement' acquired the most responses from the students in all the three classes, as Figure 5.14 below shows. Tables 5.30 to 32 in Appendix 5.18 show the numbers of responses.



Figure 5.14 Improvement perceived in seven areas

In all classes, the number of students who believed they made a lot of improvement is generally higher than the students who believed they merely made little improvement. Exceptions are: writing, grammar and translation in Ken's class, writing and translation in Wendy's class, and writing in Diana's class, where the opposite is true. Regarding grammar, in Wendy's class, it is an area which over one third (N=11) of the students believed they made a lot of

improvement. In Diana's class, the numbers in 'made a lot of improvement' and 'made little improvement' in grammar are equal (N=7). Only in Diana's class, translation is an area where over one third of the students (N=11) believed they made a lot of improvement.

5.7.2.3 Increased preference in communicative approaches

When asked to think back on whether their preferences had changed over time, more students grew to like activities conforming communicative approaches, e.g. group work, discussion. In addition, they became more confident in some areas which they had stated having problems with, such as grammar and tests.

Ken's students grew to like group discussion, interact in English, games and group learning. Wendy's students increased their affections to speaking English, discussing in English, group activities and group competition. In relation to Diana's students, they gained interest in group discussion, group activities, volunteering in answering questions, and interacting in English. Wendy's and Diana's students stated that they grew to like practising grammar, grammar instruction, learning grammar, learning vocabulary, and less dislike tests.

In the final workshop (6), the raw data and preliminary analysis of the data were provided to the teachers. Diana was very pleased to know that her changes of using small whiteboards in communicating, and assigning scores became her students' favorites, surpassing watching MVs. Wendy then realised two students in her class do not like group work. She stated: 'It is normal that in a group some like certain activities while some do not'. She continued: 'I am very glad that some students expressed they feel their improvement because of group work. They become not afraid of speaking English because of group work'. Ken

noticed that his class were in favour of games and group work. He also noticed that Diana's class expressed their very positive attitudes towards using small whiteboards and assigning scores, which are two things frequently recommended by Diana in those days.

I also expressed my concern regarding why most students stated that they needed to improve their grammar. The teachers' responses are consistent; it is influenced by the grammar practice sheet. Although in recent years, most textbook publishers follow the national guidelines in compiling the textbook, the grammar practice sheet they provided for the school teachers remains similar (Figure 5.15 below). Students need to be very familiar with the texts in the text book so that they can acquire high marks in that sheet.

八年級英語(三)【第1次平時考】		範圍	Lesson 1 I Joined a Summer Camp	年 班 號 姓名
◆ 一、文意字彙：20分（每題2分）				
1. Jason has to go to c_____m school after school every day. He studies English and math there.				
2. Lisa got (得到) a fifty-eight on the English test. She f_____led it.				
3. The Huang family lives next to us. They are our n_____rs.				
		() 6. David is good at basketball. He always (總是) uses his excellent skills _____ our school team. (A) of (B) at (C) on (D) under		
		() 7. Alice _____ with her friends last Saturday. They were very happy. (A) watch a movie (B) practices tennis		

Figure 5.15 An example of grammar practice sheet

5.7.3 Integrating all data sets

The findings from all sets of data are congruent with three other main themes which emerged from the interview data: (1) those students hope to learn more beyond the domain of the textbook; (2) they perceive that some communicative activities have the potential to replace form-focused practice; (3) they believe that communicative approaches promote their learning and improved their

motivation. The data from the two questionnaires and my observations of the students' reactions can fit well with these three themes, as expounded below.

In terms of students' desire to learn more, While the teachers believed their practice was suitable for their learners, the data revealed the opposite was more likely to be the case: they were willing to do communicative activities to learn more (e.g. SWI1, SDI1). The most cited preferences in Questionnaire 1 are 'group discussion' and 'free talk in English'. This suggests that the students had the desire to learn more beyond the textbook domain. While their teachers had been hesitant in asking the students to interact in L2, Questionnaire 2 data reveal that the requirement to 'interact/talk in English' was an enjoyable change.

In order to learn, many students responded that it is necessary for teachers to correct their errors, even when they would lose face. On the other hand, if the activities were less demanding, the students of higher levels were observed to occupy themselves with personal things (Diana's students) or sleep (Ken's).

These findings from the first questionnaire suggest that it is necessary to integrate grammar (their fear) with communicative activities, which often use group work and create opportunities for learners to use the language (their preferences). Also, the interview data show the students' perceptions of replacing FonF with communicative activities. In the interviews immediately after the classes, they shared their views that some communicative activities can replace form-focused practice; they were positive about the effects of those activities on their all four skills (5.7.1 and 5.7.2). One example is that they did not like drills and they understood immediately the group activity involving writing on the whiteboards could replace drills and be expected to acquire similar results.

Another example is when one of Wendy's students suggested 'applying games to teaching lessons' for the reason that it 'makes me feel English is easier to learn, and is relaxing' (Questionnaire 1). This suggestion matches both Theme 2 and Theme 3, which demonstrate that both students' learning and motivation can be promoted by communicative activities.

5.7.4 School exam results

For ethical considerations, and to provide as rich data as possible, I present school examination results. As school examinations matter significantly in this research setting, it was necessary to monitor any impact brought about by this study on students' examination results. This secondary school held three examinations in a semester and the results are summarised in Table 5.33. For the first school exam, Diana's class was ranked top of the 26 classes. Wendy's class came in the 13th place and Ken's class was ranked 21st.

Table 5.33 School exam results

	Diana	Wendy	Ken	All classes	s.d.
1 st Mean score	82.50	74.16	69.74	73.81	4.11
Z score	2.11	0.09	-1.00		
Rank	1 st	13 th	21 st		
2 nd Mean score	81.20	73.39	68.68	72	3.8
Z score	2.42	0.37	-0.87		
Rank	1 st	9 th	22 nd		
3 rd Mean score	82.37	74.5	67.23	72.6	3.9
Z score	2.51	0.49	-1.37		
Rank	1 st	7 th	25 th		

For the second mid-term exam, Diana's class was still ranked as number 1; Wendy's class had moved up to the 9th place, while Ken's class went down slightly to the 22nd. For the third/final exam, Diana's class was again leading the rest of year 8 classes, and the z score (2.51) also shows that the difference among them expanded continuously. Wendy's class kept progress with the ranking forward to the 7th. Ken's class ranking kept going down and ended at the 25th place.

5.8 Conclusion

The combination of the findings from the questionnaire, observations and interviews shows that Ken's lessons which were more traditional and teacher-centred, were the ones where students believed they made less improvement in grammar and writing. In contrast, in Wendy's lessons which were led with more communicative activities, more of the students believed that they made a lot of improvement in grammar. While Diana continued making progress with communicative activities, translation along with listening, speaking and reading were the areas where more students believed they made a lot of improvement. The findings support the theories and past research findings concerning which of the range of communicative approaches are beneficial to all four skills. The examination results also support this view.

By presenting this research chronologically, I have attempted to illustrate the dynamics of the spiral and cyclical processes in action research. It has demonstrated how the processes of and the consequences arising from these processes in a previous cycle informed the next cycle. In the next chapter, all the data sets are integrated to provide answers to the three research questions.

Chapter 6 Discussion

In this chapter, the research questions (RQs) are addressed by synthesizing the findings presented in the previous chapter and relating these to the existing literature. This chapter is structured according to the three research questions.

6.1 RQ 1: how the teachers' knowledge grew

This section addresses the first research question (RQ1): 'How does the teachers' practitioner knowledge in adapting communicative approaches develop within their own particular teaching context?' There is clear evidence of growth of practitioner knowledge in adapting the key features of the approaches to practice in their contexts, as the step-by-step analysis reveals. The first part of the section elaborates on the teachers' initial beliefs and knowledge (6.1.1); followed by a summary of their understanding of the approaches before this action research (6.1.2); the final part draws together evidence on how the improvement was made in developing practitioner knowledge (6.1.3).

6.1.1 The baseline practitioner knowledge of the communicative approaches

The teachers' baseline practitioner knowledge of communicative approaches was primarily drawn from the first interviews, the preliminary and first observations. The data revealed that there were inconsistencies between their reported beliefs and their practice, and poor understanding of the approaches.

In the first interview, all the teachers explained what they believed the most important for junior school students to learn complies with the characteristics of communicative approaches. Diana and Wendy highlighted communication ability, while Ken aimed to balance the instruction of the four skills. All the teachers pointed out that they had employed CLT to some extent. However, inconsistency between their stated beliefs and actual practice was revealed. The knowledge that the teachers brought to this teacher education programme emerged and can be categorized in five areas, namely: knowledge about the teacher's role, language teaching, learners, contextual factors and about curriculum.

6.1.1.1 Knowledge about teacher's role

Some beliefs were easier to identify than others; for example, beliefs revealed from observations. Some were uncovered through cooperative reflection, while others became evident after analysing the data. From observations, one feature easy to identify was that all the teachers' practice was very teacher-centred, and proved deep-rooted after reappearance for several cycles.

Generally in the first two observations, Wendy's class exhibited an extremely uneven power relationship. In the teacher talking time, there were few cases of co-constructed meaning between her and her students. She not only chose what to talk about but also restricted what was to be answered. She accepted only the answer corresponding to the one in her mind, or in the textbook. She controlled every detail in order to process the class smoothly and to suit her quick tempo in an obviously dominant mode. From the first interview with her students, they kept suggesting 'give more response time for slow learners'.

The features in Wendy's talking time are not unique. Walsh (2002: 4) provides a list of the prevailing features in the EFL classrooms, which are:

1. Teachers largely control the topic of discussion;
2. Teachers often control both content and procedure;
3. Teachers usually control who may participate and when;
4. Students take their cues from teachers;
5. Role relationships between teachers and learners are unequal;
6. Teachers are responsible for managing the interaction which occurs;
7. Teachers talk most of the time;
10. Teachers ask questions (to which they know the answers) most of the time.

It is clear that such features reduce students' learning opportunities to use the target language. The lesson observations match Walsh's (2002) description of the prevailing features.

In the lesson which aimed to teach the students how to introduce themselves, Ken spent the whole time explaining questions and the corresponding answers, and these were practised by asking the questions and requiring answers in a whole class mode. The class was completely dominated by the teacher who claimed that CLT was used because he always asked questions for his students to answer. His practice also shared some features of Walsh's (2002) list. However, the correspondence was less than for Wendy's practice, due to Ken appearing more open to different answers and more often prepared to take students' contributions into the flow of his dominant teacher talking time.

Diana's teacher talk in the preliminary observation shared many features with Wendy's. Although Diana showed her quick modification to communicative approaches, some behaviours exposed her teacher-centred practice in the mid-point of her PK development. When she made an attempt to use a task, she sometimes went back to the teacher-dominated mode. One example is that in

the first part of jigsaw reading in Observation 2, Diana sensed that some students later became disengaged. To ensure effective learning, she asked her students to stand up and read again. Her teacher-dominated mode was also found in the second half of this activity when she checked the answers. While firstly she handed over the main role of learning to her students, later she often took this role back. These may suggest her deep-rooted teacher-centred beliefs. Similar behaviours were evident in the subsequent observations.

Those teachers' instruction features within a teacher-centred mode of classroom discourse consequently minimise the student roles as envisaged in communicative approaches. According to Mangubhai *et al.*'s (2007) CLT characteristics, the student role should be as an active participant who asks for information, seeks clarification, expresses opinions, and debates; the students are also negotiators of meaning, proactive team members, and monitors of their own thought processes. The features of the teachers' instruction often led to a low proportion of student-initiated questions, as observed. The uneven distribution of conversations between both parties common in a teaching context is rare in the real world. Learners should have some opportunities to ask questions; that is, a higher proportion of student initiative is suggested not only for a more balanced distribution of the power relationship, but also for promoting 'more 'investment' on the part of the learner' (Thornbury, 1996: 282). Thornbury (1996: 282) cited Van Lier (1988) who comments that 'A significant source of motivation and attention is lost when turn talking is predetermined rather than interactionally managed by the participants'.

However, deep-rooted beliefs may not be easy to shift. In reflection on his second observation, Ken seemed satisfied when he observed that the result of

an information gap activity interested his students, and increased their participation. Two hours later, Ken shared with me his concern that he was not sure whether or not students could really learn from interaction between each other. Earlier, John shared with me the thought that teachers often feel they have completed their duty when they explain clearly about the usage of words and grammar in the content of the textbook. Similarly, Diana shared her worries about whether learning would happen in group work.

One reason for the difficulty of reducing teacher-centredness is, as Thornbury (1996: 287) points out, that teachers may feel 'disempowered' and 'un-teacherlike'. Deep-rooted teachers' beliefs may result from their process of formation, which may have been formed early in life, derived from their early experiences as learners and teachers, and may be culturally bound. These features may contribute to resistance to change (Williams & Burden, 1997; James, 2001; Borg, 2006). When recalling their past learning experience at high school in the first interview, all the teachers revealed that the Grammar-Translation method, the Audio-Lingual approach, and grammar instruction were dominant. All share a lack of interaction among students and between the teacher and students.

6.1.1.2 Knowledge about language teaching

Over time, teachers' beliefs about language teaching gradually also emerged. In analysing Wendy's observation data, some other inconsistencies were found. For one thing, she claimed that she seldom taught grammar in the first interview. However, she was observed consistently reminding her students of the grammar rules, even when the students engaged in discussion. For another, in the second

interview, Wendy pointed out that she did not observe any student interacting in English, and she thought most of the students did individual work rather than engaged in discussion. It seems odd that the teacher designed a discussion activity, but she did not expect students to discuss. In the third observation, when I understood Wendy's classroom behaviours better, two main features were found: one is her repeated stress on form; the other is her tendency to focus on something other than learning L 2; for example, unified, tidy actions in role play (5.4.2.2).

However, Wendy's skillful group management has the potential to create a successful communicative classroom. She trained her students well in rearranging seats rapidly, she was excellent at gaining her students' attention and encouraging the students. When the students did group work, Wendy played her roles well, hovering, monitoring and providing assistance. Her practice conformed with Jacobs' suggestions of teachers roles in doing group work; the roles include 'modelling collaboration, observing and monitoring the students' performance, and intervening when a group is experiencing obvious difficulty' (1998 in Ellis, 2005: 27).

Diana was not observed presenting the reading using the Grammar-Translation method; however, in the third interview (Dec., 2013), she reflected on how grammar formerly played a part in her teaching. In her words: 'I feel a great change of me. In the past, I began teaching a text with grammar rules. Now I start with meanings...'. She had felt that her students could not learn if she did not explain the rules first; only such instruction could give her the sense of security.

In analysing Ken's observation data, some of his beliefs were uncovered. In O3,

Ken often started with a single topic of vocabulary (e.g. clothing), and subsequently introduced another topic area (e.g. adjectives regarding the weather), never mixed with categories of vocabulary in presenting the lexical form. This was followed by exercises allowing the students to use the new form, also one category at a time. Finally, the students used the vocabulary and sentence learnt earlier in production, mixing categories. This may imply Ken believes learning L2 is to accumulate form bit-by-bit, and should follow the principle of 'from simple to complicated' (Ken). This is congruent with a structural syllabus, defined by Wilkins (1976 in Ellis, 1993: 99) as:

...one in which the different parts of the language are taught separately and step-by-step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of the parts until the whole of the language has been built up.

This kind of syllabus is the foundation for the Grammar-Translation and Audio-Lingual methods (Ellis, 1993), and this is similar to what Long and Robinson (1998) label 'focus on forms'. They argue that such approaches isolate linguistic form from their meaning. Ellis (1993) observes that it is the most used syllabus in language teaching. Mangubhai *et al.* (2007) summarise a number of studies and draw a similar conclusion. This phenomenon was still true in this research setting (Hsu, 2015). As noted earlier, teachers' knowledge is shaped by their experience as a learner, and this may provide an explanation.

Ellis (1993) analyses the functions of this syllabus in terms of the ways it facilitates implicit knowledge and explicit knowledge in order to lead to L2 acquisition. He concludes that a structural syllabus facilitates intake through the comprehension of specific grammatical items, but it lacks convincing evidence for facilitating language production. He suggests this kind of syllabus needs to

be used alongside a meaning-based syllabus. In other words, Ken may not reach his aim of developing all four skills. When John and I discussed Ken's class, John commented that when a teacher is busy, it is natural for them to go back to the methods they are used to. At that time, Ken made it clear that he was too busy to design communicative activities. Hayes (1995) observes that Malaysian in-service teachers utilised their past skills and old habits in teaching the content of a new curriculum to save time and efforts.

The inconsistencies between Ken's and the other teachers' stated beliefs and their classroom practices are also found in much research. For instance, Karavas-Doukas (1996) draws from past studies and considers it not uncommon that teachers profess commitment to the communicative approach but follow more structural approaches in their classrooms. Basturkmen *et al.* (2004) found inconsistencies between observation and self-report interview data in all the three ESL teachers. Such inconsistency also appeared in Farrel and Lim's (2005) case study in a Singaporean primary school and in Wyatt's (2009) case of a teacher in her first lesson. Richards *et al.* (2001) also observed that the majority of 112 ESL teachers in their survey expressed their enthusiasm for a communicative approach, but meanwhile continued to believe that grammar teaching is central to language learning.

Basturkmen *et al.* (2004) provide an explanation for this inconsistency, with real time decision making based mainly on practical knowledge, rather than technical knowledge. They applied Eraut's (1994) and Ellis' (1997) distinction of technical knowledge and practical knowledge; the former 'denotes the body of explicit ideas derived by a profession from deep reflection or empirical investigation'; the latter 'denotes the procedural knowledge an individual practitioner has derived

from experiences of teaching and learning languages' (Basturkmen *et al.*: 246-7). They assert that in interviews, teachers tend to draw on technical knowledge; however, when confronted with classroom situations, they draw on practical knowledge. The conclusion is drawn from ESL teachers who already have technical knowledge of communicative approaches, but do not appear to apply it. However, for this study, the more dominant reason may be that the teachers lacked an understanding of communicative approaches.

6.1.1.3 Knowledge about learners

In the first interview, when addressing any problems that had occurred when they had implemented CLT in their classrooms, Wendy and Ken asserted that the problems originated from the students. As Wendy pointed out, 'students' use L1, being silent, passive, and being passive is the biggest problem'. However, according to my observations, her students were not silent. Wendy exposed her beliefs about learners being passive. She indicated that she gave students oral tests, which are often a presentation in pair or group of a constructed talk that they have discussed with partners in private beforehand. This may suggest that she believed the learners were passive and in the power of the tests; only tests can drive students to open up. This agrees with Williams and Burden's (1997) metaphor of 'resisters', used to describe teachers' beliefs about learners (refer to Section 3.3.3.4). According to Williams and Burden, teachers with this view tend to rely on compulsion to drive the students.

Ken's main concern was related to students of low levels. Ken had a longer list: 'students don't speak up, students can't answer, can't read, low level, and students can't understand their teachers'. These echo reasons contributing to

the lack of students' participation given by the teachers' in Tsui's study (1996). Ken's view of the students' low English proficiency had not changed by Interview 3.

Gradually, all the teachers showed their concerns about students of low levels, who appeared to be their focus, and this influenced the purposes and contents of the lessons. It worried Diana that the students would not understand if she did not explain word by word. She was aware that the class was of mixed level and her strategy was to focus on the middle level of the students, which she believed accounted for 60% of the class (Interview 3). Therefore, her teaching was restricted mainly within the area of the textbook. Meanwhile, she allowed higher level of students to do anything they liked on their own quietly in the English class. This deprives those students of their right to be taught.

All three teachers, holding dominant modes in practice, reflected their view of learners, which was in accordance with Williams and Burden's (1997) metaphor of 'receptacles'. This type of learners need to be filled with knowledge; teachers with this view often employ methods involving transmission of language items to these learners, and seldom leave the learners to explore language items. That is, 'receptacles' are more common, while 'individual explorers' and 'democratic explorers' occur in few cases.

From these data which set out to understand the teachers' baseline knowledge, this study concludes that these teacher-centred and dominant features have not changed in 30 years, and can be compared with past studies, for example, Long and Porter (1985). Facing a class of 30 mixed-level students, the teachers all offered one solution to cover everything. Long and Porter (1985) term this predominant mode of instruction the 'lockstep', 'in which the teacher sets the

same instructional pace and content for everyone, by lecturing, explaining a grammar point, leading drill work, or asking questions of the whole class' (p. 208). The common problem in the three classes was that the less able students may not be interested in class; at the same time the needs of able students are ignored.

6.1.1.4 Knowledge about contextual factors: time

Diana identified lack of time to be a contextual problem in implementing communicative approaches in the initial interview. She commented, 'if there is no pressure from time, we can use as many tasks as we like'. Wendy and Ken only pointed out that the students' attitudes and abilities were the problems. However, later, Wendy often indicated to me that there was not enough time to cover the syllabus. Their responses are similar to Carless' (2003) observation that the pressure of time often squeezed out the employment of tasks. However, Wendy often carried out some extracurricular activities. For example, her class had a drama play activity for Halloween. Wendy stated, 'it's okay to alter the schedule a bit for it'.

For Ken, time turned out to be a significant issue in terms of preparation for communicative activities. As mentioned in 3.3.4, the heavy workload also discouraged the teachers from preparation for tasks, as Crookers and Arakaki (1999) also observed. These seem to be sensible reasons. However, this current study has different findings. The observation data and their analyses reveal that communicative activities can be easily fitted into a lesson without compromising learning or the need to cover the syllabus.

As can be seen from the observation data, there is room for adjustment in those teachers' lesson plans. Firstly, time was often not well used in class with, for example, redundant instructions. As Tomlinson (2014) recommends, teacher talk should be used for the function of modelling, rather than for instruction and interrogation. The examples also include some activities with little contribution to learning; as can be seen in the students' reactions to Ken's and Diana's more FonFs activities, learning can hardly happen without the students' attention and involvement and Wendy's role play (in Preliminary and O3) was not relevant to L2 learning.

The problems also lie in procedures and time management. Regarding procedures, Wendy described herself (at least twice) as 'too greedy'; she incorporated too many questions/items into activities. One example is asking 18 questions with the same sentence pattern on the same topic (O5). Regarding time management, it was often observed that unnecessary time was spent on a single step. The examples include: taking five minutes for students to take turns reading one sentence in a group of six in Diana's second observed class; spending four minutes to choose 16 words to fill in the BINGO grids in Ken's class. In Wendy's interview activity in O2, four-and-half minutes were spent on writing two sentences on their own cases and writing another two sentences after interviewing. In such cases, communicative activities can fit in by taking out some of the redundant time and reducing the time spent on activities with similar functions. Communicative activities are flexible according to the time available, lasting anywhere from three minutes to 40 minutes or above. To plan a lesson this way takes practitioner knowledge, and such knowledge can be developed through repeating the procedures of carrying out the plan, reflecting on that experience and re-planning. When teachers' practitioner knowledge is well

developed, they would not regard time as a fundamental restriction.

6.1.1.5 Knowledge about curriculum: the textbook

While textbooks for primary and high school learners in Taiwan follow a structural, linear syllabus, many versions of textbooks used offer layered syllabuses with a structural syllabus and a topical syllabus, as in the textbook used in this research context. However, the three teachers were not aware of the topical nature of the syllabus. In Interview 3, Wendy commented that this textbook makes it difficult for her to design lessons, stating 'it [the content] is messy.' Wendy provides as an example: 'in Lesson 9, it appears "five straight hours". It should teach "go straight" first, so students won't get confused [in the usage of 'straight']'. She had her own beliefs about the order of presenting form to students, and she believed it should be followed strictly.

Her attitudes indicate the low status of a textbook to her. This is further evidenced in what she saw as her priorities. She prioritised what she believed is more important to the textbook, for example, arranging extracurricular activities for Halloween and usually spent time supplementing extra knowledge beyond the textbook for her students, in one-direction transmission. This is very different from the other teachers in this study and reported in the literature. For example, Carless (2003) concludes that when facing very tight schedules, in Hong Kong, the teachers' priority was to finish the textbook, regardless of learners' needs and progress.

Ken was also not aware that the textbook which they had recently chosen to use was topic based, either. '... this textbook is based on grammar', he asserted

(Interview 3). He also pointed out that the logic of the sequence was awkward, and he needed to make his own handouts to fix it. As for Diana, she stated that she was used to teaching the reading in a similar way to the grammar, and she understood then that she should give more weight to meaning. All three teachers believed it necessary to supplement the textbook with other materials. They usually made worksheets, of which the content were similar to what McGrath (2002) observes: they were usually designed to facilitate learning through activities, with frequently a focus on grammar. However, the contents were mainly rule explanation and exercises but later becoming more focused on interactive activities.

Nunan (2003) concludes that most teachers in Taiwan had a poor understanding of the approach when commercial textbooks started to include principles of TBLT, with the targeting of their market at the public school sector from 2000. The study, provides support for his concern that the teachers were not able to use these materials effectively before the teacher education programme.

6.1.2 Teachers' understanding of communicative approaches

In the first interview, all the teachers pointed out that they had employed communicative approaches to some extent. In the preliminary observations, the teachers asked questions to create opportunities for their students to speak the L2. However, their classes revealed a low level of communicativeness. There was clearly evidence that the teachers lacked practitioner knowledge of communicative approaches. It was also observed that this may be less due to beliefs, but more with lack of understanding of what these approaches are.

All the teachers believed that questioning and answering itself was within the line of the approaches. In the first interview, Wendy provided as one example that she 'always encourage[s] groups to discuss, using as much English as possible'. However, in the preliminary observation and the first observation, this seemed at best to mean answering her questions. In all three teachers' talk, the common features which related to the first criterion, primary focus on meaning, are coded as 'few meanings exchanged', 'mainly teacher initiative'; the features relating to interaction and involvement are coded as 'no or little feedback to encourage students' talk' and the teacher 'seldom building on learners' contribution...', for example (refer to Table 5.9).

They did not understand the key features of communicative approaches. In the activity for the infinitive (O2), Wendy's integration of a meaningful context and employment opened group discussion were considered changes. However, the interview data showed that Wendy was not fully aware of these aspects related to communicative approaches. Instead, she regarded it as a grammar activity. John and I shared a similar view that Wendy had not understood them at the second cycle of this study. After receiving the input about communicative approaches in the first workshop, in the first observation, Ken used the 'interview' activity which was developed by the three teachers together. He also modified the two activities using my examples, which were a jigsaw activity with information gaps, and the 'designing dialogues' activity. In design, all the three activities allowed some extent of interaction; however, Ken appeared not to understand that the process of negotiation of meaning is a key element which should be addressed. Diana's interpretation of a task was to ask students to complete something, which seemed less related to a primary focus on meaning or interaction in L2.

This study set out with an assumption that teachers' beliefs are the most important of the four main factors. However, in collecting the action research data, the factor of teachers' understanding about communicative approaches emerges as the dominant factor in the implementation. These findings conform to those of a great deal of research which have pointed out lack of understanding by the practitioners, for example, Karavas-Doukas (1996) in Greek contexts, Nunan's (2003) case studies in seven Asian countries (including in Taiwan), Deng and Carless (2009) in China, and Humphries and Burns (2015) in Japan.

As mentioned in 3.3.1, there are several possibilities to explain the lack of understanding, including confusion about the variations of CLT and TBLT which make it difficult for practitioners and even teacher educators to understand (Mangubhai *et al.*, 2007; Dörnyei, 2009; Carless, 2009). An effective TD programme is required to assist teachers understanding them and provide ongoing support. However, such programmes are seldom evident in past studies, as Li (1998), Wedell (2003), Carless (2009), and Humphries and Burns (2015) point out. The teachers in this study did not receive effective training either in pre-service courses or in-service projects.

6.1.3 Practitioner knowledge growth in communicative approaches

The last section presented the baseline of the teacher participants' knowledge and beliefs relating to communicative approaches. There is clear evidence that all the teachers lacked an understanding, and there was little synergy between their stated beliefs and actual practice.

During the five months of intervention and investigation, the findings show that the teachers' practitioner knowledge was primarily shaped through experiencing

practice towards approaches, and this led to the reconciliation of their beliefs. Continuously, these knowledge bases were influencing intricately and mutually informed. This section illustrates how the teachers' practitioner knowledge grew in terms of the knowledge about the teacher's role, language teaching, the learners, and contextual factors.

6.1.3.1 Practitioner knowledge about the teacher's role

As concluded in 6.1.1.1, the roles which the teachers played were often contrary to communicative approaches. However, with their practice increasingly being modified towards the approaches, their practitioner knowledge about the teacher's roles was shaped accordingly. The features of decreasing the teachers' roles and increasing their learners' roles were manifested both in their teacher talk and group work activities.

Teacher talk

As noted in Section 6.1.1.1, the features of the teacher participants' practice conformed well with Walsh's (2002) description of the prevailing features in the EFL classrooms. For example, teachers largely control the topic of discussion, content and procedure, who may participate and when. These features display a very teacher-centred role and an asymmetric power distribution. When teachers invite and encourage students' contribution into the flow of the class, the authoritative role of teachers can be reduced. Diana's rapid improvement in her teacher talk skills enabled more turns from the students; at the same time these changes increased the students' power, and decreased the teacher's authority. This happened to Wendy as well when in the second observation she gave a

wider role to students by actively inviting their ideas. Ken employed mainly group work activities in the five observations. The only exception was in O3, where the Q and A pattern was similar to that in the preliminary observation. However, in between there were interview activities, which allowed escape from the pattern of T->S. T->S..., and empowered the students.

Group work activities

Although Wendy used some common strategies of communicative approaches, e.g. role-plays, games, discussions in the first two observations, her classes were observed as being heavily teacher-fronted, teacher-centred and teacher-dominated. Then, influenced by her peer, Wendy became more open to students' different answers after O1. In O2, she welcomed different ideas with few limitations to answers; in O3, Activity 2, she continuously encouraged students' different ideas. By giving more weight to learners, a more active contribution was provided by them. Further in O4 and O5, Wendy was observed to conduct other student-centred activities apart from discussion activities, such as the listen and draw activity (O4). In that activity, time was allowed for the students to interact with peers. However, she could have let the students introduce or comment on their own/peers' production. In the last observation, Wendy took a step further to employ two mainly student-centred activities, i.e. 'interview and share', 'discussing and guessing' as a great change. She appeared very satisfied observing students' creativity and application of learnt phrases.

Ken had conducted activities to allow his learners time and space to do their own group/pair work since O1. During O1, the interview activity, jigsaw activity, and O5, the information-gap activity and the interview activity, Ken walked around the

groups, monitoring and answering the students' questions. This indicates that Ken as well as Wendy when they handed over time to the students, shifted some of their primary role from transmitter to facilitator.

However, Ken did not let go all the control. In some group/pair work activities, e.g. the discussion activity in O1, Ken guided the students carefully. Although from the second observation, he started to make attempts to let the students understand meaning in text without his explicit explanation, he took back the power again when checking the answers for comprehension questions (described in 5.3.2). He was practising the belief that only the teacher has the authority to give answers in the first three observations. Afterwards Ken reflected and stated that he should have let the students discuss and find answers themselves.

Nonetheless, Ken practised nearly all Jacobs' (1998 in Ellis, 2005) suggestions about teachers' roles in doing group work. One of my suggestions to all the teachers was that when teachers are observing and monitoring among groups, they can note down some events or common problems and feed back to the whole class later (Crandall, 1999). This can be a moment of reflecting in action, i.e. thinking on your feet (Schön, 1983/1991), and allow the teachers to make prompt adjustment.

Diana increasingly handed over the learning to the learners themselves throughout the research cycles. In O1, the unscramble activity and in O2, the jigsaw task allowed the students to work on their own. In O3 she let her students take further control of their own learning, since she took my suggestion not to pre-teach new vocabulary to the learners from the text/task in the matching activity. In O4, the students were empowered further in the structural input-like

(SI) activity by integrating her students' own experience into the input of the SI-like activity. In O5, she empowered the students completely. All the series of the activities were student-centered with her brief comments and prompt assistance in between.

However, similar to the other teachers, when checking the answers, Diana reverted to the teacher-dominated mode. A drawback would be that in this way, she did not allow herself time to stand back and observe the class. Teachers could hand over some jobs for their students to do, for example, by letting the students report their findings instead of the teacher's doing it, or letting students checking other groups' production.

To conclude, in the final observations, all the teacher-designed activities enabled the learners to talk more in class. While Diana increasingly distributed the time to do learner-centred activities, Ken and Wendy sometimes went back to more FoFs instruction to provide language input.

6.1.3.2 Practitioner knowledge about language teaching

The teachers' practitioner knowledge growth was manifested in their practice in ways more compatible with communicative approaches, e.g. better quality of teacher talk, employing group work, as well as replacing or integrating focus on forms (FonFs) instruction with focus on meaning (FonM) instruction. These knowledge bases are more related to subject matter or content knowledge, that is, knowledge of and beliefs about alternative ways to represent contents according to instructional situations (Rowan *et al.*, 2001). The growth in curricular knowledge is also more evident here, which involves knowledge of

and beliefs about how the contents should be organised in the best way for instruction (Grossman, 1989).

Better quality of teacher talk

The teachers were observed modifying their teacher talk with more personalised questions and referential questions, employing feedback and proper error correction.

Inspired by Ken, Wendy made a radical change in terms of her F-moves, encouraging and accepting different answers from her students. When she commented on Ken's class in workshop 2, she reflected that she had usually focused on catching up with the coursebook syllabus, and therefore ignored students' different ideas. She promptly put her reflection into practice, and the results were satisfactory. When she encouraged her students to think about other answers, they responded actively, and showed enthusiasm to be nominated (refer to 5.3.3).

This attitude also affected Wendy's ways to correct students' error; she employed elicitation and clarification techniques, with short and quick prompts without interrupting the flow (Lyster & Mori, 2006). She was more patient when she attempted to elicit more appropriate answers. For example, when asked about ways of keeping healthy, one student answered 'often drinks water'; Wendy asked her further, 'Is that a good way?' (Wendy, Observation3). That is, a discoursal F-move was employed with a focus on meaning rather than on form (Cullen, 2002).

Ken often related the topic to students themselves by asking them personalised questions. However, since he seldom used teacher talk in the later five observations, there are not sufficient data concerning whether he had improved

the negative features identified in the preliminary observation.

Diana made changes in her teacher talk after the first observation. She was satisfied with the results of employing referential questions. Her prompt modification to ask personalised questions is also fruitful. Diana applied those types of questions to a variety of activities, for example, teaching vocabulary, checking the written answers. Further in O3, the earlier discrete features of their classroom talk were improved, with more coherent turns. However, by the end of this programme, Diana had not successfully developed skills for the students to take the initiative in teacher talking time. Nonetheless, she was successful in achieving this by activities such as guessing games and jigsaw tasks.

Group work

Wendy is the only participant who had been using group work before joining the programme. However, her group work was more inclined to cooperative learning for general disciplines, rather than for specific subject matter, i.e. English. The conclusion was drawn from my observations that one crucial element is missing in such 'general' cooperative learning, that is, communicative process and outcome. As John commented, an enthusiastic atmosphere in class activities does not necessarily mean that the teacher is using communicative approaches. The observation of the students' behaviours in group activities reveals limited learning opportunities in Wendy's earlier classes.

Nevertheless, Wendy did not reflect on the "missing" element until near the end of our programme. Earlier, when asked about group work, she made it clear that she thought most students did individual work, and little L2 was involved in the activity. With my repetitive emphasis on the need to require the students to

interact in L2, along with the functions of the programme, Wendy gradually reflected on this aspect. She realised that she rarely reflected on the rationale for a pedagogical activity, and finally, she started to ask her students to use L2 as much as possible. She found that the requirement did not discourage the students' participation (the student interview data also showed this), and she was satisfied with her students' performance in interacting in L2.

Ken was the only teacher who plunged into “tasks” for a whole lesson in O1. He started his first group work in the first observation class, which was mostly occupied with three “task-like” activities. However, in the process, Ken either neglected the importance of interaction in L2, or over-guided his students' language use, as seen in the ‘designing dialogues’ activity and it became very structured (refer to 5.2.3). In the interview activity, Ken could have simply reminded the learners to use English to ask and answer the interview questions. As for allowing freedom for learners, it involves more teachers' beliefs. This may indicate that copying or revising a model task in designing a task does not mean the teacher can operationalise the task well, if the teacher's practitioner knowledge of communicative approaches is not well developed.

His ‘designing dialogues’ activity was revised from my example of a task, and Ken may have made such an adjustment to suit his students. Long (2000) pointed out that the teacher is the only expert on the local classroom situation to make decisions; however, I would add a word of caution that their personal knowledge might not lead to the “right” decision. As Carr and Kemmis (1986:129) argue, people's capacity to understand and interpret their circumstances is limited by their ideologically-distorted belief systems. Nonetheless, Ken may have made the right decision that he should move gradually towards our target.

What matters is that teachers should reflect on action and in action as Schön (1983) suggests. This also made me reflect, and I found that some of my examples may be too “bold” for them. In the first two observations, all of the teachers adapted rather copied the activities I gave them.

I was worried that Ken’s underdeveloped skills in controlling group work may demotivate the learners. As Long and Porter (1985: 224) warn, ‘poorly conceived or organized group work can be as ineffective as badly run teacher-led, lockstep lessons’. For instance, the students may feel that it is troublesome to rearrange seats for group work, or get frustrated when they have few ideas about how to proceed to group work. Pleasingly, the students hardly ever refused group work as the interview and questionnaire data reveal, perhaps owing to the teacher’s rapid improvement in using group work. In O2, Ken made an improvement to the seating arrangements for mixed-level grouping, as he planned in advance to group students based on their exam results. The functions of sitting together are that, as Jacobs (1998 in Ellis, 2005) concludes, students need to be seated in a way that they can easily talk together and maintain eye contact, share resources, talk quietly and take up less space. That is, proximity in physical distance is necessary for forming relationships. The inter-member relationships can be enhanced if there is eye contact between members (Dörnyei & Malderez, 1999). In the second observation, Diana made a large breakthrough in group work in terms of her improved ability to arrange appropriate seating.

To ensure that groups function cooperatively, they may be given a task with a goal to achieve. Similarly, reward structures are also devices to encourage each member of the group to participate and contribute at their own level of proficiency (Crandall, 1999). Assigning scores skillfully means using this

technique to hold good control of classroom order, to encourage and engage students in activities. However, it takes time for teachers to develop such practical knowledge (PK); the teachers need to know when and how to do that. Learning from Wendy, Ken's skill improved greatly in the last observation.

Diana also started to employ group work after the first observation. However, perhaps influenced by the seating arrangement, some students did not perceive that there was a group activity; they thought it was a pair activity (see 5.2.1). She also made progress in skills of assigning scores for group work. In O2, Diana told the class that she would keep score, but she forgot to. In the third observation, she made great progress in using a scoring scheme to control chatting, and kept score promptly to encourage students' contribution. However, she forgot to ask her students to sit facing each other. In O4, Diana became more competent in controlling classroom behavior when doing group work. She used scoring more smoothly to invite students' further efforts to some questions, and students responded to her actively. She was aware of her progress, and felt more confident in teaching English.

Notably, she developed her own pedagogy in O2: using the A3-sized whiteboard for students to write on. This way the words are larger for her and other students to read. Earlier in the first workshop, Diana shared her worries about whether learning would happen in group work, and she believed that she would feel more relaxed when she saw them write something. Then, she developed the combination of a communicative activity with answering some questions in written form (5.3.1). This can be viewed as the interaction of her knowledge of instruction and knowledge of self. Further, in the third observation, she realised that passing the whiteboard to the next group to exchange ideas has the power

to “push” discussion. This activity is an application of a traditional cooperative activity, Roundtable, designed for language learning. By passing the paper/board, students can provide and share ideas (Crandall, 1999). This activity was used by Diana throughout the action research.

Diana’s practitioner knowledge was well developed. She could design activities which not only conform to the main principles of communicative approaches, but also thought about the details and procedures to make sure that there is truly interaction between students. On the fifth observation of Wendy’s class, Diana observed that some of Wendy’s students, in a rush to complete the task, skipped the step of interviewing, and went directly to write the results on the whiteboard. She rightly pointed out the cause for students’ not doing the interview; that is, not being given sufficient time to do it, and rightly made suggestions to remedy it.

Although Diana was reluctant to ask her students to interact only in English until the last observation, she designed other activities which can have the potential to “push” students to discuss and initiate, such as information gap activities, and guessing games. This can also be considered as a modification to communicative approaches.

All the teachers used mixed-level grouping. Long and Porter (1985) suggest grouping students according to their different needs and work on different sets of materials. This enables teacher to address individual learning requirements. This is only practical when a teacher has sufficient time to prepare differentiated materials, which was not the case for the teachers in this research setting.

The differences between the learners can have a compensation effect in heterogeneous grouping. Crandall (1999) draws on Vygotsky’s theory and points

out that:

Learners are able to function in a role more typically restricted to the teacher, providing 'scaffolding' to assist others in the group. Instead of one expert helping learners through the 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky 1978), there are several experts' (p.239).

When making suggestions for second language acquisition, it is asserted that mixing groups in terms of ethnicity and proficiency could work better than homogeneous groups (Ellis, 2005). However, Ellis (2005) also points out that there is little empirical evidence for this.

The reason the teachers adopted mixed-level group work rather than pair work is, according to my observation, based on intuition. Their PK, developed over many years, guided them to utilise the compensation effect with a group with more than two learners. They organised groups of 4 to 6 students. Crandall (1999) recommends that 3 to 6 students is an appropriate size for a cooperative group. This makes it easier for all members to participate, and at the same time, makes it possible to benefit from multiple ideas and roles of the individuals.

All teachers here knew already, (Wendy), or promptly noticed, (Diana and Ken), the importance of seating for group work, which may come from their PK. The merits of sitting together are that proximity enables learners to talk together easily and eye contact helps to build inter-member relationships (Jacobs, 1998 in Ellis, 2005; Dörnyei & Malderez, 1999).

A shift from FonFs to more FonM instruction

In the baseline observation, although Wendy interacted with her students, this was often limited to asking and answering display questions. However, subsequent observations demonstrated that Wendy was becoming increasingly

focused on meaning.

In Observation 2, Wendy's activity for the infinitive is more similar to a consciousness-raising activity (CR) than practising the form, the infinitive (see Figure 5.6). The activity could lead students into noticing the different usages between *want*, *plan*, *need*, and *love* to do something. With as many as ten examples, these verbs were not represented one at a time as a synthetic process. The design integrated a meaningful context and a more open group discussion. Clearly Wendy was not aware of these features, as she pointed out that this activity was only for practising grammar. However, this may suggest that her knowledge of communicative approaches had developed from 'answering her questions' to 'producing sentences'. Observation 3 demonstrated more evidence of Wendy's shift to FonM. She did not mention or remind students of grammar rules except from asking a student's question related to grammar, and the feedback was mainly focused on meaning (refer to 5.4.2.1). These were considered as changes that Wendy had made. After she had witnessed that her students can think independently and have the ability to construct sentences, I encouraged her to take a step further to let her students try open discussion. However, it was not until the end of this research that Wendy was willing to reconcile her beliefs to make such an attempt.

Additionally, her worksheet included some meaning-focused practice from my examples. Applying the reflective model, when the teachers practise a method, their practitioner knowledge is unavoidably influenced, and this possibly leads to changing beliefs conforming that method if the results are good. However, although in the last observation, Wendy used two FonM activities, she gave

FonFs instruction beforehand (5.6.2.1). This seems to suggest her persistent beliefs on learning from FonFs.

In O2 Ken abandoned the Grammar-Translation method, and started to prioritise meaning. When talking about changes which he had made, he replied: 'I tried to let the students to understand the meaning directly from the dialogue, and then proceed [next] to the unscramble activity'. I asked him to clarify what he meant by 'directly', and he explained: 'By playing the video two times, without my grammar instruction or translation, I let them comprehend the meaning from the video themselves'. Judging by this, Ken was half way towards incorporating communicative approaches. He had already understood the notion of starting from a meaningful context and put meaning as primary.

However, his developing knowledge of communicative approaches did not enable him to design communicative activities according to the textbook content (a difficult task) especially when facing limited time for preparation. In O3, he followed his familiar way, FonFs, in designing and conducting classroom activities. After our discussion of these issues, he employed communicative activities again in O4 and O5.

Diana changed the way she teaches vocabulary from a traditional one direction of transmitting knowledge to infusing it with new perspectives. In O1, she took the opportunities to relate the new word to the learners by asking personalised questions. In O2, she took a step further by starting with examples of the new words, and utilising pictures to create a meaningful context for using the vocabulary. This indicates that Diana was already attempting FonM and learning through using, the key features of communicative approaches.

Regarding Diana's reflection, when asked about the changes she made in O2, the first thing came to her mind was that she did not explain sentence by sentence for the text. She reflected, 'because I want to try 'task'. The reflective observations were consistently shaping her beliefs and knowledge. In the interview after O3, Diana pointed out further: 'I found that the didactic method has its own limitation, now I find using whiteboards for students to produce writing and the results are better'. From December 2013, Diana was very confident when carrying out communicative activities, and believed meaning can be put prior to grammar instruction, and believed this would not reduce their acquisition of grammar rules.

The promotion of integration of form with meaningful contexts also affected John. In Workshop 5, John shared some thoughts with me. He pointed out: 'I now feel grammar is really needed to be taught within a meaningful context; in this way students can get more impression about the grammar and learn better'.

To conclude, whether consciously or not, all the teachers had put meaning as primary in some of their practice. The better results they had experienced themselves helped reconcile and shape their beliefs towards communicative approaches.

6.1.3.3 Practitioner knowledge about learners

In the first interview Ken and Wendy explicitly pointed out that learners' attitudes or abilities could discourage the implementation of communicative approaches. The common problem in all three classes was that lower-level student needs were addressed at the expense of higher-level students' right to learn. It was frequently observed that Diana's students seemed uninterested in "lectures",

and Ken's students of both extremely low level and high level took a nap in class. Gradually, when Diana started employing CLT or tasks, she realised that they are more suitable for a mixed-level class through the designs of activities. Diana shared:

A boy whose English ability is good seldom engaged in class, not volunteered in answering question, but this time I saw him participating in the activity... I am happy to see more students engage in class (Diana, Interview 3).

Diana also observed her students helping each other during group work in O4 and O5.

With Diana's increasing modifications to communicative approaches, she realised that her students uncovered abilities when she asked them for further explanation or to discuss ideas, and the like. To quote her words:

I am very surprised to find out that the students' brains have a lot of things. For example, today when we wrote Dos and Don'ts, the students said something not in the textbook, such as: do not eat junk food, watch too much TV, and be happy (Diana, Interview 4).

The scope of the students' responses beyond the textbook was also found in Wendy's class, e.g. 'keep smiling', 'Don't eat junk food'. Unlike Diana, Wendy did not comment on that. However, she surely witnessed her students' desire and abilities to share their ideas when they were invited to.

In his first observation, Ken was aware that two groups like speaking English. In later observations, he realised that some of his learners' vocabulary was beyond the textbook. Also from his experience of using communicative activities, he realised that setting a goal drives students' motivation to learn (Interview 4).

Another contributing factor to their PCK was feeding back to the teachers the

students understanding of the content and this helped developing the teachers' knowledge about the learners. In the last interview, Wendy, reflecting back on her talk regarding passive learners, rejected her earlier theory about the learners. 'I must have misunderstood your point then', she stated. Diana shared with me that she had used to believe that FonFs mode could lead to learning. This belief led her to believe that learners' low achievement was due to being passive and not working hard (Interview 4). I would assume that the belief of the power of FonFs mode is also held by Ken and Wendy. Diana evidently led a rapid modification to communicative approaches and that led her to this realisation.

6.1.3.4 Practitioner knowledge about contextual factors

Time constraints are a common theme addressed by all the teachers as an obstacle. In the initial interview, Diana commented on this factor's impact on choices of classroom activities. Wendy often mentioned it in response to my suggestions, and time was certainly an issue for Ken's preparation for lessons. With the teachers' understanding of the approaches, and their development of PK and PCK, they gradually realised that time is not necessarily a constraint.

Diana made much modification towards communicative approaches since the first observation, incorporating my advice to the extent her confidence allowed. She listened to my identification of the root problems, such as time management. In Interview 3, she stated that she can finish the syllabus before the mid-term examination without being delayed by the implementation of communicative approaches. The good school examination results confirm her confident statement.

Regarding Wendy, with her increasing openness to evaluating her practice and

considering the outsider's opinion, I believe that she gradually understood time is not a barrier to communicative activities. She was aware that some procedures went wrong and this caused time to be wasted. In O5, for example, she expressed regret for using too much time on Activity 2. She admitted being over-ambitious in asking them to complete as many as 18 sentences.

Ken in Interview 3 stated that he even did not have enough time for lesson plans and reviewing communicative approaches. As I always held the stance that I would try my best not to add burden to those teachers, I kept reminding them that many communicative activities do not need much time to design, and emailed them some examples. I planned to show more examples in Workshop 3. However, Ken was not able to attend, and after observing his third lesson, in which hardly any communicative activities were employed, I learnt from him that he had not read my examples. I also confirmed with him that he had taken considerable time in collecting the photos of e.g. weather for making the PowerPoint slides. Then I pointed out how some activities which he just did can be made more communicative with less time consumed in preparation. As the data reported in Section 5.5.2 and 5.6.2 show, Ken went back on the track of communicative approaches, and seemed to get some confidence back. It appears that designing a communicative activity is easier than performing it in real time. By the end of this programme, his skills had started growing.

Conclusion

From the first two observations, the teachers revealed limited understanding of CLT, TBLT or communicative approaches. With the development, the teachers started using methodology more compatible with communicative approaches. Their practitioner knowledge developed in terms of teacher's role, language

teaching, learners, and some contextual factors, such as time factors. This development of their practitioner knowledge corresponds to the domains of PK and PCK. Their better understanding of the nature of the time issue and their learners exemplified growth of 'knowledge of contexts'. Their growth of knowledge of language teaching indicates that their 'knowledge of curriculum' and 'subject matter/content' was developing.

This study shows that when they understand communicative approaches, teachers may take action to try these out in practice. Even for teachers who try communicative activities before they understand the principles behind them, they can gain the practitioner knowledge through experience, if a reflective approach is taken. In the process of planning an activity, acting it out, observing and reflecting, their practitioner knowledge was developed and integrated with their existing knowledge and beliefs.

6.2 RQ2: how the teacher education programme helped the teachers' knowledge growth

In this section I address my second research question regarding how this programme appeared to help the teachers in developing and implementing communicative approaches in their context. The effectiveness of this programme is discussed in terms of achieving this research goal in four main directions: the design/methodology used in this research (6.2.1), the methods used in the TD programme (6.2.2), the planned input and adjusted input (in 6.2.3), and the strategies employed to respond to the reality (6.2.4). 6.2.5 points out that the principles of the approaches also contribute. In 6.2.6, I specify which areas of PK

and PCK this TD programme helped with. 6.2.7 summarises the main findings. The final part (6.2.8) further discusses the claims which this research made.

6.2.1 The design/ methodology used in action research

The main challenges in the implementation of communicative approaches result from the complex nature of teaching and teacher learning, and the busy school life. The complex nature of teaching often causes a gap between theory and practice. Although great philosophers such as John Dewey have urged that there should be no division between theory and practice, one cannot deny the fact that the existence of the gap is often a common phenomenon, as this study observed. The teachers in this study, all graduates from reputable pre-service teacher training universities, lacked knowledge and an understanding of the approaches. They thought that they *were* employing CLT, and thus were not aware of any problems in their teaching. In such cases, action research was a suitable strategy since its cyclical nature could allow the researcher to identify any problems and pursue solutions with practitioners, and thus progressive improvements can be made during several reflective cycles (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1999). This AR study which incorporated the teachers' voices draws similar conclusions to those of Eilks et al.'s (2010) participatory action research: when the voices of the teachers were heard, attitudes towards innovation changed, and their PCK developed.

In this study, the teacher education programme which followed the AR enabled teachers to learn a new pedagogy, as evidenced by the reflection of Diana:

I heard of communicative approaches more than ten years ago when a very experienced teacher, Ms. Fu, in our school led a training programme. Back then, even though I thought her methodology was brilliant, I never had the motivation to try. Now it is very different; you are along with us. You gave us the ideas, help us to solve problems which emerge when we carry out communicative approaches; you interview our students about their opinions, and give us feedback so we can adjust our practice (DI3, Dec, 2013).

In this short comment, she points out some aspects which this research intended to uncover, without being prompted by me. Firstly, it is not a type of a training programme, which often covers methods and leaves the teachers on their own. There was an expert working in collaboration with the teachers, helping deal with problems in the specific context. Secondly, Diana also comments on one of the research methods-- interviews with students, and the information about what their students' perceptions were provided. Finally, she was doing what this research hoped the teachers would do, i.e. the teachers were able to adjust their practice through the reflective cycles.

The supportive role of an action researcher also contributes to this study. That teachers need support is pointed out by Diana in the third interview: 'I need some support for my changes'. In Li's (1998) survey, a majority of the Korean teachers point out that lack of support discouraged them from practising CLT. It frustrated them that no expert was able to provide advice when they needed help. Diana supported her peers as well; she attended all her peers' observed classes.

The roles of an action researcher also include being a mentor and a facilitator. From Diana's reflection in the quote above, the reasons why she did not use communicative approaches can be identified: lack of motivation, support and information. Being a mentor, I listened to the teachers' voices; for example, when

the teachers perceived challenges from time constraint, I was also being a facilitator to support them with my knowledge and provide them with methods and materials.

The teachers' changes were also supported by their learners' voices. Eilks et al.'s AR highlights the teachers' voices; this study includes the students' voices as well. When a teacher makes attempts to change, he/she may be concerned about students' reactions. For teachers as action researchers, their claims of having made improvements need to be verified by their students (Cain, 2011). Interviews with students followed each observation on the same day, and their feedback was reported to the teachers promptly. The overwhelmingly affirmative attitudes towards the teachers' inclusion of communicative approaches increased the teachers' confidence in the approach. Even negative feedback from students would also help teachers, since teachers could reflect on it, and take it forward to the next planned stage.

The implementation of a new pedagogy such as communicative approaches requires teachers to make a link between the theories of the approaches and their practice. Teachers who lack knowledge and understanding of them may not know where to start, nor be capable of adequately identifying problems with their teaching. They may even doubt the feasibility of the approaches, before they understand them. They need an expert who knows the theories well and also has the experience of practising communicative approaches in a similar context in order to help them to identify problems and find solutions, and to support them when they face issues in the process of AR. Otherwise, theory may remain only theory, from which practitioners may distance themselves.

6.2.2 The methods used in the TD programme

Guided by the theoretical framework of this study, action research was employed to include critical reflection, experiential learning with sociocultural and complexity theory perspectives. The teacher development programme was set up to serve the purpose of this action research. Within this framework, the following methods were used: observations, group discussions and workshops.

6.2.2.1 Observations

Observations were not only a tool to collect data in this AR, but also a method for teachers' reflection in this TD programme. Six observations of each teacher were conducted as planned. The preliminary observations contributed dramatically to my understanding of the teachers' teaching routines. The observations were particularly important when the teachers' practice was not congruent with their stated beliefs. Their practice shown in the preliminary observations had few elements featuring communicative approaches, which resulted in low communicativeness. Thus, I could follow my original plans of introducing the approaches. Meanwhile, I observed that each teacher had some unique skills in teaching. I believed that they could learn from each other by mutually observing. For example, Ken and Diana could learn Wendy's skills in group work management; Wendy could learn flexibility in accepting different answers from Ken. This strengthened my decision to use collaborative learning. As the data revealed in Chapter 5, collaborative learning actually happened frequently; they observed and learnt some of their colleagues' strengths.

Peer observations promote reflection for both the observer and the one who is

being observed. It is evident that they benefit the one who is being observed. As mentioned in Section 3.4, it was not compulsory for the teachers to keep records of a lesson in a written form, such as journal writing or lesson reports. However, when they reflected on their lessons in interviews, all the teachers self-evaluated their lessons in terms of the aspects which Richards and Farrell (2005: 39) point out a lesson report should include. Those aspects include:

- What aspects of the lesson worked well?
- What aspects of the lesson did not work particularly well? Why?
- What aspects of the lesson should be done differently next time?

In Ken's reflection on his Observation 2, he noticed aspects regarding students' engagement and involvement, and envisaged modification for the future:

Through the activity, the students' participation and interaction between students increased, not the same as before when I kept letting students repeat after me; they are really 'learning'... The result was that students seemed interested, and participation increased. Next time I will assign easier tasks for students who did not participate today (Ken, Interview 3).

Ken also reflected on something corresponding to the second item above. In his words, 'It was my first time to run this activity. I think I should operate it more times to think through what would be the most appropriate procedure'. He perceived that the procedures could have been managed more smoothly, and this resulted from lack of experience. The teachers' capacity to reflect on these three aspects is perhaps due to their experience.

These three aspects which the teachers often covered in their reflections are congruent with the three of the criteria which Richards and Ho (1998) identify as necessary for critical reflection: being better able to evaluate both positively and negatively; being better able to solve problems; greater focus on 'why'

questions. By the end of the final cycle, all the teachers showed higher levels of reflection, which match two other features of Richards and Ho's critical reflection: being better able to come up with a new understanding of theories, and being better able to reflect across a time span and experiences. However, these teachers seldom discussed their beliefs to give grounds or justify their decisions.

Frequently examples can be found where peer observations inspired the observer to reflect. For example, in providing feedback for Diana's third observation, Wendy commented on Diana using English to explain the meanings of words, saying it was a good point because: 'I seldom use it and it's really good for students to practise their listening' (Peer-observation sheet-Wendy to Diana3). Another striking example of observer reflection was when Wendy made prompt changes after observing Ken's openness to students' different answers, commenting on this with her reflection immediately after the class. This is clearly a change in attitude rather than a technical application of a skill. It would be fair to assert that Wendy's radical change started from becoming open-minded to different answers, and this was inspired by Ken. After observing Ken's class, she reflected that she often focused too much on completing the syllabus, and thus neglected the students' different ideas. She promptly put her reflection into practice, and the results were satisfactory.

Peer observations also facilitate observers' knowledge growth. Diana learnt group work management skills from Wendy through her observations. These were skills identified by me that Diana needed, based on my first three observations of Diana. Diana was aware of this, as she articulated in the workshop. Also, Diana reflected on this in peer feedback-2 to Wendy. She listed four good points in Wendy's class in relation to group work management,

including the way to arrange seats for group activity rapidly (within 20 seconds), and how she assigns scores to encourage students' contributions.

These observations are equivalent to modelling for the observers since they demonstrated certain techniques. Modelling is useful only when the observers perceive that they share similar contexts (McGrath, 1997), as they did here. From the perspective of the reflective model, Wallace (1990) argues that such observation should lead to reflection instead of imitation. Applying the principles in the reflective model, a demonstration lesson can be another kind of experience to be analysed and reflected on, and may contribute to the formation of observers' own theories.

When they missed the key points related to the approaches, I, as an observer, often tried to find opportunities (depending on the time available) to direct them to that track. For example, when I observed they performed PPP procedure where I believe it was not the most appropriate, I tried to draw their attention to consider whether a particular form should be taught in isolation first so that the students can then use it later in a task; or whether the form should be presented through a reading text to enable the students to learn its usage from a meaningful context, or learn through communication with peers in a task. Such a decision is based on a hybrid knowledge base: the teachers need to draw on their understanding of how their students understand this form and on the curricular knowledge to organise the presentation of the form in order to make it comprehensible. If the teachers develop their PCK of the approaches well, they would become aware of the moments when a form or a text is likely best understood through learner participation in communicative events. Perhaps helped by the function of extended time in this AR, in my role as teacher

educator I was able to develop strategies to gradually draw the teachers' attention to the principles of the approaches.

During the cycles, Diana took account of almost all of my suggestions to modify her teaching practice. Ken did that only when he had time to plan communicative lessons. Wendy seemed to attend very selectively to suggestions in the first few cycles. It appeared to me that Diana was the most open-minded, while Wendy appeared more open-minded to her colleagues than to me. Judged from Ken's radical changes in the first two observations, his open-mindedness was not in doubt; however, he needed time to take in the new approach, and apply it to his practice, as he claimed. It is also possible that he needed more motivation to support him in overcoming the time obstacle.

6.2.2.2 Group discussion

The TD programme attempted to maximise the benefits of action research, which is to collect evidence systematically and collaboratively for subsequent rigorous group reflection (Burn, 2010). For these experienced teachers, it is natural for them to reflect on their action. In addition, their reflection was inspired further in group discussion (Farrell, 1999). As Farrell (2001: 27) suggests, 'discussion within a group of peers can be a powerful way of exposing teachers to different viewpoints.' They could articulate their reflective thoughts in interviews and group discussions by means of stimulated recall. In both ways, I, as teacher educator, helped to clarify their reflections. The stimulated recall involved playing video clips to the teachers and asking them to comment on some incidents, or maybe explain the thinking and reasons that underpinned the action. Their reflections can be fine-tuned in dialogue (Mann & Walsh, 2013).

The video recordings for the teacher who taught the lesson constitute stimulated recall; for other teachers, they were cued response scenarios. Both are useful tools to elicit teachers' stated beliefs (Basturkmen *et al.*, 2004). Stimulated recall can be in the forms of video clips, written transcriptions or the description of lesson plans and outlines. More frequently, however, the videos were replaced with written forms, due to very limited time. Written data usually allow more detailed inspection and make the analysis easier (Wallace, 1991), and can replace the very time-consuming nature of video watching (Ellis, 1990). In this sense, using written data instead of video presentation of class is likely to cause little loss in teacher learning.

Both one-to-one interviews and the focus group mode provided stimuli for 'talking points' and promoting discussion (Mann & Walsh, 2013). Some events were selected for post-observation discussion with the teacher privately. Any events which seem worthy to discuss with peers were discussed in the workshop, with the proviso that they would be not sensitive or offensive to any teachers. In the workshops, two basic procedures are: to understand and help teachers to understand their beliefs, and to share the teacher's experience/experiments. The latter was often a tool to achieve the former. That is, through sharing and discussing their teaching events, it may help them to reflect on their practice and beliefs. This is the only way to replace reflective activities, which we did not have time for.

The dialogic/collaborative approach functioned well in promoting richer articulation of reflection. The following extract provides an example of dialogic reflection. In Workshop 2, Diana shared her changes in teaching style, one of which was not explaining the words and sentences before the students

answered the comprehension questions. Even though she found their answers were satisfactory, she could not help worrying:

Diana: This time... I did not explain the words and sentences... and ask students to discuss with group about the comprehension questions. I checked the students' answers, and the results were OK, but really OK?

Wendy: We ourselves do not stop being worried.

Diana: Yes, we do not stop being worried.

Wendy's comment inspired Diana's awareness that the insecurity was from herself. However, such dialogic collaboration of reflection does not necessarily lead to critical reflection when the teacher has not fully understood the teaching alternatives. In Wendy's reflection on her students' responses, which were not satisfactory to her (5.2.2.1), she stated:

I should have guided students in the worksheet, the pictures, the usage of verbs. For example, I asked a student, she replied, 'I taught math with my sister.' If I have guided them first, she could have spoken a correct sentence (W12).

Her reflection seemed critical to the extent she identified what went wrong and had thought of solutions. I suggested to Wendy that she could still ask students further questions relating to their personal experiences when a response was not the standard answer that she wanted. Wendy simply replied: 'We don't have much time because of the school schedule'. In this dialogic collaboration of reflection, she revealed her consideration of the context. However, evaluated in terms of three levels of reflections, she failed to meet the first level; she hasn't given thorough consideration of the effectiveness of the method she was using and considered alternative methods (5.2.2.1).

The teachers' reflection stimulated my reflection on the reflectivity. The levels of

reflection should not be viewed as an increasingly desirable hierarchy; it depends on the context. Take this study for example, it is impractical to expect the teachers to reach the highest level, at which they might consider the moral, ethical aspects and the worth of a method. Instead, I suggest practitioners should start with Level One, the technical level. It may constitute a basis for providing tools to enable higher stages of reflection to develop, a view shared with Hatton and Smith (1995). This echoes some scholars' appeal that teachers should be provided with theories to enhance effective reflection on their practice and the grounds of it (e.g. Ur, 1996, 2013a).

The time in the workshops was often too short for in-depth reflection to happen. However, frequently, in our group discussion either in post-observation interviews or in the workshops many exciting methodological options and ideas were generated.

6.2.2.3 Teachers' engagement and their knowledge development

The extent of the teachers' engagement in this TD programme seems to be related to their practitioner knowledge of the approaches. This argument is plausible for the reason that at the baseline, the four teachers shared similar beliefs, as discussed in Section 6.1.1.

These problems and issues in this TD programme were mostly related to time. However, the issue of time had less impact on Diana's knowledge growth. Diana was fully engaged in this programme. Table 6.1 below summarises the participants' involvement in the TD programme quantitatively in terms of the four basic events for participants' attendance. Diana participated in all the activities.

She and John often stayed after the workshops and had a one-hour discussion with me. That time allowed them to ask questions, and allowed me to show them some unfinished parts in the workshop, for instance, explaining some examples which linked communicative approaches to the textbook. This scenario is similar to Wallace's (1990) description that trainees would find it much easier in a less formal setting to get information from the tutor and also to clarify unclear issues.

As shown in this diagram, Wendy missed four observations of other teachers and Ken missed seven. Also, Ken only attended two workshops. Although he allowed time for the one-to-one interviews for post-observation discussion, and I briefed him shortly on what he had missed in workshops, there was no learning from peers, or self-discovery from discussion with peers. Wendy's attendance was something in between. Due to the multiple functions of the workshops, absence surely had a great impact.

Table 6.1 Participants' attendance in the TD programme

Activity \ teacher	Diana	Wendy	Ken	Total
Workshop	6	6	2	6
Observation	5	5	5	5
Post-observation interview	5	5	5	5
Observer	10	6	3	10
Total frequency	26	22	15	26
further involvement	Journal writing			

It might reasonably occur to the readers that teachers' attitudes to learning were more dominant in this programme and reflected in their own time management. Wendy and Diana, as class teachers, had similar circumstances, as did Diana to Ken, as MOE consultants, but Diana seemed to manage her time better. This

leads to the consideration that teachers' attitudes might be related to the complexity of change. Similarly, in Haggarty and Postlethwaite's (2003) findings, lack of time for engaging in AR was mentioned by the teachers in both implicit and explicit ways. However, interestingly, they also found that some teachers were more effective on time management than others, despite school circumstances that were broadly similar.

Diana engaged actively in reflective activities. She showed me her notes about her reflection on practice. Although arguable, journal writing has been regarded by some scholars (e.g. Mann, 2005) as a very productive tool for reflection. Due to this TD programme's lack of instrumental goals (e.g. certificates), it may be difficult to require the teachers to keep a reflective diary during TD. However, Diana's case can be considered as an example showing that without instrumental goals provided by this TD programme, she could develop intrinsic motivation in improving her teaching. By the end of the second cycle, Diana shared with me that she had adopted the approaches in her year 9 classes, and that she often drew on her knowledge of them to coach the teachers who she supervised. She remarked, 'Thank you very much for introducing communicative approaches to us. Now I better know how to coach the teachers'.

My main challenge, as a teacher educator, resulted from the voluntary nature of the teachers' participation; some teachers lacked time commitment in engaging with this programme; or it is more fair to say that the school life was very busy. This forced me to adjust the methods and activities used in the workshops. In the following section, I will recap the adjustments which have been made, and discuss their impact on the TD programme, in particular when they led to the emergence of compensative methods.

6.2.3 The use of input and its adjustment

In addition to the original plan of providing the teachers with input knowledge, two ideas developed in the AR cycles may have contributed: the input was supplied according to the individual needs, and adjustment was made to cater for the teachers' preferences. This input appeared to become integrated gradually within the teachers' existing practitioner knowledge during the cyclical processes.

6.2.3.1 The input as planned

As was planned, the teachers were provided with input data, including the theories regarding communicative approaches and examples of ways to apply them to the textbook. The rationale of offering this type of example is that it would be ineffective to leave theories to teachers, who would continue to consider them to be theories irrelevant to their pedagogical praxis (Wallace 1990). It was intended that the examples would be provided for the first few cycles, until the teachers were confident in their application.

My initial plan did not aim for a radical eradication of the teaching of grammar, due to my understanding that grammar was still very important in the teachers' beliefs. Therefore, any examples given demonstrated how form-focused instruction can be integrated with communicative activities. I was open to making adjustments to those plans once I had collected the baseline data from observations and interviews. The teachers' baseline knowledge and their understanding of the approaches suggested the initial plan should be retained since it evidenced the teachers' deep-rooted beliefs in the structural syllabus, as

reported in 6.1. The plans appeared to be effective, given that the teachers often adapted the examples I provided.

The input also included their students' attitudes towards the changes in instruction, which were acquired from the five interviews after each observation. This feedback was provided in the hope that it would assist the teachers' reflection. The reports on feedback could contribute to developing one component of PCK, i.e. knowledge about students' understanding of the subject. Providing this information served as the basic aim and procedure in each workshop. In addition, I was always aware of any contextual factors, for example, the school examination results, and would report to the teachers, if any occurred.

Although these teachers did not seem to take account of the students' views promptly in their next cycle, at least the positive attitudes of the students did not discourage the teachers from carrying on with the approaches. I did not personally identify any contextual factors; however, I assisted the teachers in dealing with the contextual factors which they perceived, as elaborated in the following section.

6.2.3.2 The input supplied to (individual) teachers' needs and preference

In addition to the original plan of providing the teachers with input knowledge, other input was provided reactively to meet the individual teachers' own needs. Some needs were addressed by the teachers, while I judged others from the observations.

More often than not, one teacher's concern/needs was also the same as other teachers. In such cases, I provided suggestions or materials for all the teachers.

Otherwise, I provided them according to their individual needs: for example, in the first interview, they were asked whether they had perceived any contextual factors which might hinder the implementation of communicative approaches. These teachers had different concerns; Diana identified time as an issue, while Ken and Wendy pointed out the factors of their learners. These did not seem to me to be real problems, as long as they understand the approaches. I firstly dealt with easier tasks, for example, providing manuals of techniques on how to deal with students who are reluctant to communicate. I believed that these materials would be helpful for all the teachers, and thus they were provided to all of them. I initially did not respond to all the teachers' concerns about time, since there was no easy answer. I was confident that they would find that issues of time would not be worsened by implementation of communicative approaches.

For post-observation discussions, the teachers' openness to me developed at different paces. Diana was open from the first cycle, but for Wendy, this happened near the end of the research. Ken was somewhere in between. It is natural that the more they were willing to share with me, the more prompt assistance I could provide: for example, Diana shared with me her concerns about whether learning could happen in group work. I encouraged her to attempt communicative approaches and find out for herself. In discussion with Ken regarding his barely communicative classes, he remarked that he did not have enough office hours to design communicative activities, nor did he read my examples sent by email. I showed him some examples of communicative activities which take little time to design and prepare. There were some evident changes in his following lessons.

Additionally, the input provided was adjusted based on my observations on what

the teachers needed, and I scheduled this into workshops. That is, the input was in response to the observed lessons. For example, in Workshop 2, in which the first observed lessons were discussed, the focus was on the F-moves in response to the observation that these teachers commonly failed to provide feedback. To address my concern in O2 that the teachers would need to be provided with examples of activities that would develop students' abilities to perform group/pair work, I arranged and showed some of these kinds of activities in the third workshop. In Workshop 4, in addition to following the plan to present them with another variety of tasks, i.e. interpretation activities, I scheduled the discussion of two case studies. This was in response to the third observation when it appeared that all the teachers still lacked the practitioner knowledge needed to include more than a few communicative elements in their teaching. Case studies from the research papers and real cases from the three teachers worked well in this programme. Research paper cases served well in discussing negative features in teaching, while the teachers' own cases were often used to address good points.

Here is another example of adjustment. In Workshops 1 and 2, the teachers were provided with practical examples of the application of theories regarding communicative approaches to their textbook for three consecutive lessons, i.e. lesson one to lesson three. I incorporated the contents, including the vocabulary, phrases and grammar points. Then I stopped the provision to observe the teachers' development and the PPP procedure was still observed in Diana's and Ken's classes. PPP is criticised for not necessarily allowing learners to learn a new form. With learners' already being primed to focus on a particular form, it would be difficult for them not to think about it; as a result, they would fail to engage in real time communication (Ellis, 2010; Willis & Willis, 2007). The

teachers still needed support with modelling examples. To draw their attention to consider the appropriateness of replacing PPP with communicative approaches, I started again by providing them with more alternative activities to choose from. These activities were also provided along with more detailed descriptions, since I often lacked the opportunity to present them in person. This mode of input was carried on from lesson 5 to lesson 8. The last lesson, lesson 9, was left deliberately without my examples with the intention of observing the teachers under this situation. However, the main grammatical structure- the future tense, was exemplified with SI activities in the workshop.

With provision of a variety of choices of activities in my lesson plan, in workshops or post-observation discussions, I often tried to draw their attention to consider whether a particular form would be better learnt through more FonFs or FonM instruction. This awareness-raising move may contribute especially to the development of subject matter/content knowledge, and this can most effectively be achieved by use of reflective activities. However, such activities had to be reduced in workshops due to time constraints.

Initially, I could not help worrying that they might simply copy the examples I provided, given that such behavior was not the goal that this TD programme aimed to achieve. Before long, however, I found that the teachers would not simply copy the examples. From the first observed lessons, the three teachers often adapted the example activities in teaching or in compiling worksheets. I did not ask them to comment on the usefulness of these materials. However, when John shared his perceptions towards his action research with his peers, he commented, 'Tina's materials help me a lot, so I am willing to design some jigsaw and information gap activities, and carry them out in class'. In Interview 3,

Diana once commented that she appreciated the activities I designed, but she was not used to doing them.

Tasks and procedures used in the workshops also needed adjustment. Sometimes input data which the teachers could compare, evaluate and then discuss in a plenary were replaced by lectures by me in order to fit them in within such a short time. However, when I was giving the lectures, I often paused to invite comments or feedback. This may reduce the disadvantage of lack of feedback within a lecture mode, as Wallace (1991) points out. To summarise, the impacts in relation to changes of the choices of input data, tasks and procedures used in the workshops have been discussed, and are believed to make best of constraints.

6.2.3.3 Conclusion

In this study, the reality of tight school schedules and time constraints meant that how the input could be available for teachers to learn efficiently and effectively became extremely crucial in the TD programme. I believe that I maximised workshops under time constraints. This can be examined by the evaluation of how they contributed to achieving the goals of this TD programme. The goals include (1) to provide the teachers with knowledge about the approaches, (2) to explore their beliefs and enhance reflection (3) to assist in solving problems arising in any stages (4) to gather and inform them of any information needed, and (5) finally for them to put all the information into designing lesson plans, and their implementation. It can be found from this section that these goals were all covered by the provision of both planned and reactive input.

This section has discussed the adjustment needed to deal with the challenge which resulted from the voluntary nature, that is, the lack of time commitment for engaging this programme. The adjustment includes the input, procedures and activities used in the workshop. Also due to the voluntary nature, and their right to withdraw from the research if they wish, I needed to address their problems in teaching less directly. This issue for me is a part of what really happened in this research; as both an educator and action researcher, I incorporated these variables into the flow of my study, and devised strategies to deal with this issue, as discussed below.

6.2.4. The strategies developed in response to circumstances

Perhaps the lack of sufficient reflective activities delayed the teachers' progress in understanding communicative approaches. The teachers were often not fully aware of some problems in their instruction, and thus did not see the need to change. In addition, based on ethical considerations, the study should not harm the participants in any ways. This exacerbated the above problems.

Initially, the three teachers' participation in this programme was to support my doctoral study. They had all accepted several requests from postgraduate students to observe their classes for research, or requests for peer observations. However, joining my study was a whole new experience for them. This was the first time a student researcher had tried to "tell" them how to teach, and "comment" on their lessons. I was aware that I needed to keep a low profile, and be extremely careful to avoid annoying them.

Under this circumstance, I developed some strategies to serve my purpose

instead of directly pointing out what they need to do to make improvements. In this section, I will explain and discuss the effectiveness of the choices of these strategies. The first interview with Diana's students is coded as SDI1, the second interview with Diana's students coded as SDI2, and so forth.

6.2.4.1 Strategy 1: Supplement with practical examples

After the first two observations, one conclusion was that the teachers needed to build up the students' ability and habits to interact in L2. In Ken's first observed lesson, there was an interview activity whose goal was to interview group members about what they did for their families. However, little interaction in L2 was observed. Thus I provided the teachers with practical methods and activities for them to encourage their students to use L2 (refer to Appendix 5.6), and this was my first strategy. However, it was done in written form for them to read in their own time due to lack of time in the workshops. An excerpt is shown below:

We can develop some 'strategies' to increase students' involvement. In the interview activity... For example, the teacher can write three things... on a piece of paper in advance (as a key),... Students always like to guess; especially, they want to see if they can think as their teacher does.

There was no direct evidence during observation of any teachers applying these suggestions. Upon reflection, the operation of these examples was too complex to leave for the teachers to read alone. Giving some demonstration or using loop input strategy would probably have provided much clearer pictures and achieved better results.

6.2.4.2 Strategy 2: Employment of case studies

By the third intervention cycles, Diana and Ken had experienced their students' positive responses to their modification to communicative approaches, and they felt excited by these responses. However, according to my observations of their third lessons, the teachers still needed to reflect on the communicativeness of their teaching and make improvements. To avoid annoying them by pointing them out face-to-face, I thought using case studies would be a good strategy. The cases studied came from Deng and Carless' (2009) data, in which teaching activities, which were performed by an EFL teacher in China, were described. Two activities were chosen as cases for our discussion due to a number of contextual similarities with this research context. Only with similarities could the teacher perceive the applicability. The article provided very complete data, which included a description of the activities in detail, feedback from peer teachers and students, and, most importantly, the scholars' opinions. After reading each activity, we had a discussion of preset questions: 1) an evaluation of the communicativeness of the activity, 2) recommendations to the teacher or for the activity, and 3) predictions of the students' perceptions of the activity.

The first two questions match Ellis' (1990) tasks, with Question 1, the evaluating type, and Question 2, the improving type (refer to 3.4.6.1). Question 3 was added for the purpose of eliciting teachers' reflection on their understanding of their students' perception. The results of this discussion were quickly seen. In the following lesson, Diana and Ken both employed guessing games, and Wendy used a new activity with an information gap.

6.2.4.3 Strategy 3: Presentation of scenarios as evidence

While the teachers made some improvement in modifying their instruction to conform to the principles of communicative approaches to create more learners' learning opportunities, I observed that the teachers still did not require their students to interact in L2, either when answering their teachers' questions or discussing with peers. My position was not to appeal for complete use of L2 so I did not highlight the students' willingness to try their best to use L2 in the early steps. However, the problem of little interaction in L2 was too salient to ignore. As Carless (2002) comments, once the amount of L1 use starts to exceed L2, it becomes a concern.

When I first addressed this concern in the second interviews with the students, they expressed their willingness to try interaction with peers in English. I reported this promptly to the three teachers. However, it seemed that this information was neglected, and not taken into consideration for their following practice.

Concerned because we were near the end of this programme, I felt the need to make my point more explicitly. Thus I decided to ask them face to face. Diana clearly showed her agreement, but I could not say the same for Wendy. Wendy stated that she did not view interaction in L2 as necessary. Under the circumstance of limited results from the first two strategies in this matter, a new strategy was developed. I noted down some moments when there were possibilities for students to interact in L2, which the teachers or students failed to take, and pointed them out to the teachers later. Below are two examples.

In Wendy's fourth observed class, she had a 'Listen and Draw' activity. For this

activity, one student in each group opened the book and read the text about the four seasons to the rest of the group, who were required to listen to the speaker and draw what they had heard. The reality was that when they were negotiating for 'drawing' (should be 'meaning'), the students were observed to be using L1 in interaction, even for easy phrases for their level, such as, 'draw a tree', 'here'. In another example, in O4, Ken had a guessing game related to famous people in Taiwan. The students used Chinese for phrases which should be simple for their levels, such as 'American' and 'live in Taiwan'. However, in the interview, I asked the students how to say 'live in Taiwan' in English, and they could not make prompt responses. I reported this scenario to the teachers in the fifth workshop, and they felt surprised.

As a result, three days later, Wendy told me in a pleasant tone that earlier that day, she asked her students to interact in English, and no Chinese was allowed. Her students accepted this, and Wendy seemed satisfied. Diana shared with me earlier her concern that she was not confident in speaking only English in class. I encouraged her by saying that teachers can set up rules to require learners to use only L2 in some circumstances. The teachers do not necessarily use L2 only, since on some occasions, teachers need to use L1 to make themselves understood, as discussed in 3.3.5. In the last observation, Diana started to announce the rules for using only L2 for her students.

I find the suggestions I made to the issues of scarce use of L2 in interaction very similar to those made by Carless (2002): for example, students need to be taught the language of interaction or negotiation of meaning, such as 'Can you repeat?', 'Do you mean...?', etc. Carless (2002) points out that these kinds of language seemed not to have been taught in his research setting. In addition,

teachers should tell their students their expectations for language use at the beginning of an activity. During an activity, students need to be monitored in their use of L1/L2, and 'carrots and sticks' can be used to motivate students to use L2.

All the teachers do not meet Stanley's (1998) observation that teachers can find it difficult to accept evidence of pedagogical issues in their classroom. Stanley explains that before teachers reach a level where they have sorted out their emotions, e.g. fear, anger, they may choose not to reflect on their issues and retreat to a safe distance.

6.2.4.4 Strategy 4: Report students' responses to scenarios

Another strategy developed at the same time was to take the opportunity to ask about students' willingness to try interacting in L2 at certain moments which I had noted down in the observations. For example, when Wendy's 'Listen and Draw' activity was discussed, all the interviewed students expressed willingness to do it in L2. The transcription of their talk was compiled in the hand-out which we used in the workshop:

The students in the interview expressed that they like this activity, since this activity helps 1) 'Cooperation with division of work, 2) listening, 3) speaking' (how?: 'when we read to our peer, we need to make sure we are understood. We need to be careful about the pronunciation and stress on keywords'... (SWI4).

Obviously, the last line reveals a congruence of some SLA theories. Thus I took the opportunity to connect students' feedback to what the relevant theories have to say about the function of interaction, as the excerpt below shows.

This exactly conformed to what the interaction hypothesis and the output hypothesis have to say about the function of interaction. Interaction for production will trigger cognitive processes that contribute accuracy rather than fluency...

In the hand-outs, I continuously updated the teachers with their students' willingness in interacting in L2, and shared the constraint which Wendy's students pointed out:

...Teachers can remind students to use some English to negotiate for meaning. Again, in this interview I asked the students' opinions about interacting in English, and again these students stated that they were willing to try. Differently, this time the students pointed out what discouraged them from interacting in English—'pressure of time limit'. This encouraged students to 'use L1 to communicate since it is the quickest way to finish a task'. The students have developed such a 'strategy' in such a situation, according to them (SW14).

Wendy should know that the situation shown above specifically refers to her class. She was observed to keep reminding students of time, counting down to push students to finish quickly. However, the time was often spent much more on non-communicative events. With the process of action research, Wendy became more open with me. In the last interview, when asked why she did not ask her students to interact in L2, she stated:

I didn't stress it. (pause) No reasons, just forgot. I always want to train their speaking ability. I felt the pressure from time, and I focused on results, and therefore neglected the process. For the long run, it became a teaching habit. Most teachers in Taiwan have the same habit. I really want to say 'thank you' to you [for reminding me of this aspect] (W16).

This reflection can be considered to be developing a reflective view of teaching, which is, as Richards and Farrell's (2005: 37) paraphrase of Dewey's (1933) idea explains, 'to move from a level where they are guided largely by impulse, intuition, or routine to a level where actions are guided by reflection and

self-awareness'. Since Wendy's class has commenced interacting in L2, my last question for her was, 'Is it possible to request students to use L2 in interaction in our teaching context?' She replied without hesitation: 'Okay. (with a very affirmative tone) [Carrying out this requirement] It's effective and the results are getting better and better.'

6.2.4.5 Conclusion

In the teachers' development of communicative approaches, it was often the case that the problems the teachers identified were not the same as those the researcher identified. This phenomenon is similar to the finding in Lefstein and Snell (2011). The authors comment that 'school teachers and academic researchers tend to look differently upon what happens in classrooms, and researchers' views are not necessarily better than the teachers' (p. 505). However, the teachers often missed some key elements when carrying out the approaches and led fewer learning activities. They were unaware of the lack of communicative elements in their activities, and neglected the importance of using L2 in interaction. As discussed in 3.1.3.4, drawing from Activity Theory in SCT, the extent of the engagement in using an L2 is associated with the availability of language learning opportunity (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). This aspect is too important to neglect.

6.2.5 The compelling principles of communicative approaches

When I drew the teachers' attention to theories, their responses conformed to my assumption that most theories related to communicative approaches are too

compelling to refute, for example, learning a language through using it in communication. To quote Tsui's (1996: 146) words:

Although one should avoid making the sweeping generalization that talking equals learning, and forcing students to participate when they are not ready, one cannot deny that participation is very important in language learning.

Additionally, their responses supported to my belief that it is difficult for teachers, especially in EFL contexts, to refute a word of “wisdom” from Tomlinson's talk in the IATEFL conference 2013, which I shared with them:

Make sure you limit the time you spend talking and maximise the time your student(s) spend talking. Talking is the one thing they can't do outside class (Tomlinson, 2014).

When all the teachers successively shared their concerns about whether learning would happen when learners engaged in group work or communicative approaches, I pointed out to them that there is no guarantee that learning would happen after learners are explicitly taught the usage of words and grammar. None of the teachers could argue with this, and they seemed to agree with me.

Regarding tasks, I agree with Hunter's (2013: 477) views that tasks can attract teachers due to 'the creative and humanistic possibilities they offer for their classrooms' rather than the claims of their scientific grounds. Tasks are flexible in topic and time. Teachers can design a task according to the topic in the textbook, and decide the amount of time for it. These features of tasks should be introduced to teachers in order for their value to be completely understood.

6.2.6 The areas of PK and PCK growth helped by this TD programme

This section has addressed how this programme appeared to help the teachers

develop and implement communicative approaches in terms of the design/methodology used, the methods used in the TD programme, the strategies employed to respond to the reality, and the planned and the adjusted input. It also addresses the compelling principles of communicative approaches per se. Here, I focus on how this TD programme helped to achieve the aim from another perspective- the areas where it helped the teachers in their practitioner knowledge development.

The input of examples and the application of theories contributed to the teachers' subject matter/content knowledge. This type of input may accumulate a teaching resource repertoire. Providing the teachers with feedback from their learners (as input) contributed to the knowledge of students' understanding (a PCK), regarding their conceptions and preconceptions which, for example, students with different ages and backgrounds bring with them to learning.

I pointed out some things in observations and led them to discuss and reflect on action. My suggestions or feedback always followed consideration of contextual factors, e.g. the need to use the textbook, which helped them to include curricular knowledge. This was often the main theme in our discussions and in the teachers' reflections. This often led them to think of adjustments for the next action and enriched their strategic knowledge repertoire (a PCK).

These knowledge bases are mutually influencing (Elbaz, 1981). Whether teachers would apply their knowledge as it developed also depends on their knowledge of self, which refers to understanding their own strengths and weaknesses. It is a "personal" aspect, i.e., 'teachers have self-knowledge and they work toward personally meaningful goals in their teaching. Knowledge of self enables teachers to be aware of any tension experienced in the classroom

and to envisage an alternative (Elbaz, 1981). For example, all the teachers *adapted* rather than directly *adopted* my examples of communicative activities. Diana once commented that she was not confident enough to try the examples as they were.

6.2.7 Main findings

Studying the effectiveness of the TD programme leads to two main conclusions: teachers learn from examples of a theory's practical application and through cooperative learning.

6.2.7.1 Learning from practical examples

This study results support the reflective model which highlights experiential learning, but also adds a novel finding--teachers learning from practical examples-- to this concept. John learnt the approaches by experiencing it, as he shared:

Teachers often cannot lay back; they believe they should talk a lot [talking a lot means teaching]. Now I had the experience of doing tasks; I feel it is less tiring physically to give a lesson; I just need to walk around and provide some information (John, Workshop 2).

Initially, I intended to start by introducing theories since I believed that they could convince those teachers of the rationale for reflective teaching and for adapting communicative approaches. However, this was “rejected” by Wendy as early as the first workshop, as mentioned in 5.1.5. This reminded me that she and Ken both stated in the first interviews that their ‘willingness to participate in TD programmes’ was related to a more practical aim of applying something directly

to teaching. Upon reflection, I modified my input, primarily providing them with examples, by means of which I was able secondarily to find opportunities to introduce them to theories. For instance, after showing the transcription of Diana's teacher talk, I linked it with the theories of IRF in discussion. In another example, in studying cases from a research paper, their attention was drawn to the theories regarding information gaps. The results suggest that the teachers were more interested in practical examples, but they did not reject opportunities to learn how these examples are related to theories. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is more effective to present teachers primarily with practical examples, rather than hard theoretical ideas.

It is logical to assume that if the examples are designed to follow the principles of communicative approaches, and the teacher adapts them, they are beginning to teach according to the principles of the approaches. This is another means by which their PK and PCK can be developed. However, it is suggested that teacher educators be aware of a phenomenon whereby teachers only technically "copy" the examples. It did not occur in this study, where the teachers usually make modifications conforming to their abilities, i.e. their existing PK and PCK, and their teaching styles. The study finds that experienced teachers have sufficient abilities to adjust these examples to their class. They can see the values of activities with communicative approaches. These abilities may draw from their PK and PCK to adapt a new item to their context. An indirectly related study is Borko and Livingston's (1989). They conclude that expert mathematics teachers tend to draw from their schemata of content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) while novices often follow the textbook and the teacher's manual. 'A schema is an abstract knowledge structure that summarizes information about many particular cases and the relationships

among them' (Borko & Livingston, 1989: 475). Borko and Livingston comment that the experts' route is a more effective one since they believe that expert teachers' schemata are more 'elaborate', 'interconnected', and 'more accessible' than those of novices' (p. 475).

Conceivably, it takes a series of procedures for a teacher to transfer a theory to their PK or PCK, because this development is continually shaped and refined in a complex, dynamic process (Borg, 2006). Teachers' practitioner knowledge may be developed more effectively when they learn from examples and from practising those examples. This is the case in this study, and this path is more suitable for teachers similar to Wendy, who prefers practical examples that she can apply easily.

The experienced teachers in this study are seen to have sufficient PK and PCK to adjust the examples of communicative approaches to their classes, if they see the practicability of these examples. However, it can also be a stumbling block for trying out a new item, when teachers have been carrying their pedagogical habits or beliefs adverse to communicative approaches for many years. As discussed earlier, teachers need to scrutinise their practice and its underlying beliefs frequently. Otherwise, they may find it more difficult to change than novice teachers do. In that case, TD programmes need to focus more on reflection on beliefs.

As the data reveal, the teachers' lack of knowledge of communicative approaches was considered the main barrier. Thus, providing them with input is particularly essential. Practical examples closely related to their teaching contexts are most effective. Apart from a teacher professional group like the one in this study, where a teacher educator can provide the examples, textbook

publishers are another appropriate option to provide such examples. John also held this view. He shared with me that teachers are often too busy to design communicative activities, and he urged that textbook publishers should take the responsibility, and offer lesson plans with activities to carry out their communicative purposes. This will be further discussed in Section 7.5.

6.2.7.2 Learning from sociocultural perspective

It is often found that teachers reject researchers from outside (Lefstein & Snell, 2011), as did Wendy in this case. In addition, due to my role as a student researcher and the voluntary nature of this study, forming a community of practice was particularly helpful. This type of learning is more suitable for teachers like Wendy, who seemed to prefer to learn through her own discovery rather than be taught. Wendy's rebuttal of the outsider is not uncommon. As can be seen frequently, the top-down mode of implementing an innovation was rejected by practitioners (Eilks *et al.*, 2010).

This conforms well to Wenger's (1999) community of practice theory, which argues that knowledge constructed socially and contextually can serve the community better than any other knowledge transmitted from outside. When Hatton and Smith (1995) discuss the barriers which hinder reflection, one is that being exposed to strangers leads to vulnerability. In this study, the good rapport among these teachers gave me confidence that I could utilise their interrelationship. Using the mutual influence of peers seemed to be a key factor in facilitating teacher learning in this study.

This study finds that witnessing peers making new attempts may encourage

some teachers to make similar ones. Haggarty and Postlethwaite (2003) have comprehensive observations on this; they found that while some teachers were only willing to accept the teacher educators' introduction of the ideas which had been tested in previous research, as Diana was in this study, most teachers were willing to try a new idea after it had been tested by their peers, seen frequently in this study. In both studies, for those teachers, the 'local evidence' (p.440) from their peers' attempts reassured them of the value of the idea, and this provided sufficient encouragement for them to try out that approach. However, there were also some teachers still questioning the nature of this local evidence (Haggarty & Postlethwaite, 2003). There are many reasons for a teacher to try or not to try something, such as knowledge of self, as mentioned before.

AR is collaborative in nature (Burn, 2005). I provided my critical friend, John, with research papers regarding the rationale or evidence for my suggestions. Subsequently, we often had follow up discussions, and this sparked me to further reflect, and, therefore, generate co-constructed meanings regarding communicative approaches. I shared this with all the other teachers later.

6.2.8 Further discussion

In 6.2, the discussion of how the TD programme helped the teachers gain practitioner knowledge of communicative approaches and apply them to their practice led to the following aspects which may be worthy to explore further. Firstly, can we take the practitioner knowledge observed at face value? Secondly, would it be possible for the TD programme to reach its aims without action

research? Finally, did the voluntary nature only have negative impacts?

6.2.8.1 The validity of the claim of practitioner knowledge growth in communicative approaches

Although this study claims that there was evidence of teachers' knowledge growth in communicative approaches, it is also apparent that knowing does not necessarily lead to doing/actions, and vice versa. It was often the case that time constraints discouraged the depth of reflections. However, one cannot assume that no articulation equals no reflection. Similarly, one cannot judge teachers who do not take action as not reflecting. As Van Manen (1995) describes:

And even the teacher who has carefully reflected about what to do or not to do in each and every case, in the end must commit himself or herself to some action or non-action. Thus, a teacher who acts is always a dogmatist--the teacher may reflect or think about all kinds of possibilities but while acting one can only do one thing at a time' (p. 3).

Likewise, Borg (2006) warns that there is a distinction between cognitive changes and behavioural changes. In addition, different teachers who perform similar behaviours may hold different cognitions underlying those actions. As Wallace (1991) comments, TD, the ongoing process of development, can only be done by and for the teachers themselves.

6.2.8.2 How AR worked

The complexity of teacher learning cannot happen in one snapshot. Problems and issues emerged and needed to be incorporated into the flow of my study, and I came up with adjustments or strategies to deal with these matters. For

example, to avoid giving offence, I used certain methods or strategies to raise the teachers' awareness, and "pushed" them to notice and reflect on their problems in practice. The reflective action research cycles allowed me to react to these to ensure teacher learning happened. Only the cyclical processes of reflective action research allow time and space to do this.

These problems and issues seem mostly related to time. However, it might be that teachers' attitudes to learning were more dominant in this programme and were reflected in their own time management. In Haggarty and Postlethwaite's (2003) findings, lack of time for engaging in AR was mentioned by the teachers in both implicit and explicit ways. However, interestingly, they also found that some teachers were more effective in time management than others, despite school circumstances that were broadly similar. In this study, Wendy and Diana, as class teachers, had similar circumstances, as did Diana to Ken, as MOE consultants, but Diana seemed to manage her time better. This leads to the consideration that teachers' attitudes might be related to the complexity of change. Haggarty and Postlethwaite conclude that teachers' attitudes to risk may also constitute a significant factor in their uptake of new ideas.

So far the discussion is more related to my, the teacher educator's action research; I now consider how the individual teacher participants' action research worked. For those teachers to become action researchers, or at least reflective practitioners, they need to identify problems themselves. Haggarty and Postlethwaite (2003) view their AR as effective, based on the fact that they found practicable solutions to problematic issues which were identified by the teachers. However, the problems they identified were often not the same as those I identified. I argue that although the teachers were "pushed" to notice their

problems, it was ultimately up to the teachers themselves to reflect and make changes.

Haggarty and Postlethwaite's (2003) AR aimed to be voluntary, but, in reality, unavoidably became coercive within the school political context. They were aware of difficulties for school teachers becoming researchers, which included their busy school workload, and their abilities to conduct research. Therefore, they did not anticipate that the teachers would be fully engaged. In their words, 'We were *careful not to* require all teachers in ELG to be fully involved in all aspects of action research (my emphasis)'(p. 441). The university lecturers did some work for them as I did in my AR; for example, they conducted a literature review, presented this to the teachers, collected and analysed data. The teachers identified the problem, developed practical resources based on these data, and collaboratively interpreted the findings.

6.2.8.3 Positive impacts from the voluntary nature

This programme was informal. If it were made official, the teachers would have much more time for attending the workshops and may have been more involved. The voluntary nature had much influence on this TD programme; for example, some limitation of the use of the reflective activities. However, it also brought positive aspects.

One is that with no instrumental incentives, if the teachers did reflect, they did so out of intrinsic motivation. They knew they did not need to fake reflection (Mann & Walsh, 2013). They reflected on their practice for themselves and their learners rather than for their supervisors. This truly reflects teacher autonomy and responsibilities. In formal TD/TE programmes, journals and logs can be

good tools for reflection; yet they could also possibly become 'ritualistic' and 'mandated confessions' (Brookfield, 1995).

The second positive aspect I argue is that the voluntary nature may reduce the unequal power relationship between the researcher and the participants, which may occur in research. For instance, the voluntary nature tends to generate 'real' discussion, and this leads to teacher learning and growth. Without some authority present to assess them, they did not need to protect their colleagues, or avoid the potential threats to facing colleagues during the teacher collaborative reflection discussion (Lefstein & Snell, 2011). Lefstein and Snell (2011) observed that power relations have an influence on what the teachers are willing to share in the workshops. In their study, when the facilitator tried to draw the teachers' attention to the points highlighted by the researchers, the teachers were silent without any comments but laughed nervously for the sake of saving face of their colleagues. In contrast, in this study, the discussion among the teachers was often animated and rarely silent.

In addition, a concern that outsiders may disempower practitioners rather than empower them was not found in this voluntary project. Robinson (1993) noted that practitioners may depend on the expertise of outsiders, relying on their problem analysis and problem-solving skills, rather than developing their own. This was not the case in this study.

Another positive aspect may be that the voluntary, informal nature reduces the 'washback effect', which a formal, assessed programme may bring. 'The washback effect of institutionalized teaching assessment schemes means that change is sometimes short-lived. Adjustments would have a much long-term effect when the teacher is committed to the belief of student-centredness

(Thornbury, 1996).

To conclude, as discussed the complexity of how teachers learn to change, one should not take observed practitioner knowledge at face value. TD programmes by means of action research, taking sociocultural perspectives, and considering what the voluntary nature can contribute in many ways to teacher learning.

6.3 RQ3: contextual factors

To investigate RQ3: 'In what ways do contextual factors influence the adaption of communicative approaches?', this study aimed to hear the students' voices (through interviews and questionnaires) as well as the teachers' (through interviews). This investigation is juxtaposed with my observations of the students' reactions and any situations which emerged. I will discuss the contextual factors perceived by the teachers, i.e. time (in 6.3.1), the curriculum/textbook (6.3.2) and their learners (6.3.3). I will draw on these data and compare the difference between the teachers' understanding of their learners and the learners' own statements.

6.3.1 Time factor

Time is often pointed out as an issue in past studies which aim to understand the implementation of communicative approaches. This issue includes time available for communicative activities in class and time for preparation. As mentioned in 6.1.1.4, only Diana pointed out in the initial interview that time was a contextual problem in implementing the approaches. During the early cycles of

this research, Wendy often argued that there was insufficient time to employ communicative approaches in class. For Ken, he often had difficulty in finding time to prepare for communicative activities.

To address the issue of time constraints, I have pointed that the teachers could remove some less learning activities and improve their time management. These are examples showing that communicative activities can easily fit into the time available in a lesson without compromising learning or the duty to keep up with the syllabus. During Phase 2, the teachers gradually realised that time is not a constraint to the implementation of them.

The issues of time available for communicative activities in class or preparation are closely associated with school examinations. Concern over school examinations, high school/university entrance examinations or national exams are apparent in many contexts. Preparing for such assessment may not necessarily bring positive outcomes (Ur, 2013a). What is taught is not necessary what is learnt, if the views of internal syllabus are taken (Ellis, 2010). Instead, taking the view that language is best learnt through using it, communicative approaches can contribute to all the four skills. Therefore, it should help students in school examinations. The findings of this study support this view from the students' self-evaluation and the school exam results do not contradict this view.

To address the second issue related to time, I take Ken's case as an example. As a non-class teacher, he had more classes to teach, and his role as a consultant of the MOE Teaching and Curriculum Advisory Team gave him extra work, which occupied his break time during office hours. Diana had the same tasks as him since she also had a consultant role, but Diana had fewer classes because she was responsible for an entire class. It is notable that Diana and

Wendy did not view preparation time for activities as a problem. After the assistance addressed to Ken's needs, for example providing the input which he needed, and pointing out some issues for adjustment, Ken realised that time was not always at the root of problems.

6.3.2 Textbooks

When facing very tight schedules, the teachers felt the obligation to complete the textbook as a priority, similar to Careless' (2003) observation on Hong-Kong teachers, although this was not always true for Wendy. Kumaravadivelu (2003) based on Allwright's (1981) concept asserts that what is available to learn is a result of the interactive nature of classroom events, rather than pre-set agenda. The students in this study pointed out that they were willing to try freer discussion, and learn more beyond their textbook. However, their teachers' focuses were often on the textbook domain.

In the process of this action research, I observed that as long as there is a textbook to follow, it takes expert teachers with highly developed PK and PCK to design communicative activities/tasks accordingly. Their baseline knowledge of them, which was considered insufficient, and the unawareness of the topical/functional nature of the syllabus could not make the implementation work.

The textbook used in this research setting did not provide communicative activities. This provision is extremely important for teachers whose knowledge is still developing. My study found that these experienced teachers had sufficient practitioner knowledge (developed from abundant experience) to adapt a new item to their context; they may know more clearly than novices what will work

and what will not work in their context, drawing from their schemata. This process also contributed to their development of PK and PCK. This implies that even though variations in TBLT were provided, these could provide potential for skilful teachers to access for the most suitable options for their teaching situation, but only increase complexity for less skilful teachers (Littlewood, 2004 in Carless, 2009). In this case, teacher educators should play the role of a facilitator to help clarify the concepts of communicative approaches or TBLT.

6.3.3 Student factors

Section 3.3.4 in the literature review found four reasons explaining learners' reluctance to participate in communicative activities: 1) saving 'face' by not making mistakes, 2) being modest, 3) not being viewed as challenging their teachers as authority, and 4) their low proficiency level. These commonly cited barriers from learners by past studies are not evident in this study. Instead, this study which employed an inductive approach found that the students wished to be more active learners.

6.3.3.1 Mismatch between the students' abilities, preferences and their teachers' practice

The teachers' baseline knowledge of their learners was that they were generally low levels (Ken) or passive (Wendy). Although Diana was aware that the class was mixed-level, none of the three had a full understanding of their students' abilities. They all focused on students of lower levels, and confined teaching

content to the textbook. However, according to the data, the learners' level was not low. To revisit the students' abilities, according to data from Q1, 90% of the student participants studied English at or before age 7. That is, in year 8, those students had learnt English for at least seven years. Also drawing from the observation data, when the students were allowed to share their ideas freely, their responses with creativity and a range of vocabulary often surprised their teachers. The scope of the students' language use often stretched beyond the textbook in all the classes. The teachers' belief of the students' low English proficiency (Tsui, 1996) is proven not to be the case in this study context. Unfortunately, the teachers' non-verified beliefs about learners hindered them from trying communicative approaches.

Although there was a large proportion of students whose English level was high, one cannot neglect a fact that there were as well a small group of learners who could not follow the lessons. Conducting a lesson with a focus on lower levels of learners is not a solution to this problem. The observation data often reveal a common problem that the lower-level students may not yet be interested in class, while higher-level students' rights were sacrificed.

The data from the three stages point to one main conclusion: while the teachers were modifying their practice towards communicative approaches, their students could perceive those changes in most of the cases, and continuously expressed their preference for them. From my observations of the students, they appeared to be more active in engaging in the new activities. No data suggest that they intended to 1) save 'face' by not making mistakes, 2) be modest, or 3) not be viewed as challenging their teachers as authority. Clearly there had been a mismatch between the students' preferences and their teachers' practice.

According to the data, the students were willing to take part in communicative activities in order to learn more. This is similar to Savignon and Wang's (2003) investigation of the first year university students' attitudes and perceptions. The results showed very positive attitudes towards meaning-based instruction and negative attitudes towards form-focused instruction in contrast with Walsh and Wyatt's (2014) summary of past studies where teachers blame learners' attitudes. Few students in this study reported that they would prefer to be told the rules. Thornbury (1999) assumed this preference may be based on their learning style or their past learning experience. The current study started from the beginning term of year 8, before they were "trained" to be passive learners.

The other two main themes emerged: the students' perceptions of replacing FonF with communicative activities and their perceptions of communicative activities to learning and motivation. Below I discuss the students' perceptions of communicative activities to learning and motivation, and relate the students' perceptions to theories of SLA.

6.3.3.2 Students' perceptions of communicative activities to learning and motivation

With regard to the third theme, the students felt that they could learn and be motivated by communicative approaches. I did not expect that the students would perceive that communicative activities would benefit their motivation. For example, games were the most popular changes perceived by Wendy's students (with 12 out of 30 responses for 'like'); however, there were not actually more games in Wendy's classes. This may suggest that the fine-tuning to the approaches brought more enjoyment in English classes. This is evident from the

students' classroom behaviours; their motivation to learn increased with communicative activities.

Motivation and learning seems to have close affinity. As Dörnyei (1994) notes, group work with a cooperative mode can decrease students' anxiety by creating a supportive learning environment, which is a pre-requirement for L2 learning. This echoes what some students mentioned in Questionnaire 1: they like discussions; they find them interesting, that they can reduce nervousness and are relaxing. Another benefit of group discussion, as Crandall (1999) comments, is that it allows students to have several opportunities to rehearse before they present to a larger class, and thus feel secure. Coincidentally, this aspect was pointed out by Wendy's and Diana's students in Questionnaire 1.

While the students were motivated, they also felt they progressed in learning. Wendy's students believed they progressed significantly in grammar, an area which over one third of students had found challenging. Similarly, over one third of Diana's students believed they made great improvements in translation. As one student noted, 'I feel writing has become easier for me'. This is congruent with findings from open-ended questions, where some students claimed that grammar became easier to learn. Compared with Questionnaire 1, in Questionnaire 2, there are fewer comments on the difficulties and complexity of grammar. This finding is similar to Chang's (2006) that communicative approaches increased Taiwanese high school students' motivation and achievement.

All three themes from student data conformed to Dörnyei's (1994) strategies to motivate language learners. Regarding the first theme, being willing to learn beyond the textbook, the students enjoyed free talking and discussions. Such

events involve 'unexpected, novel, unfamiliar, and even paradoxical' elements which may arise and sustain learners' curiosity and attention (Dörnyei, 1994: 281). He suggests teachers should not always follow their normal teaching routine. In relation to the second theme, the students perceived that some activities such as games and watching videos can replace FonFs activities. According to Dörnyei (1994), activities including game-like features (such as puzzles, problem-solving, elements of suspense, hidden information) can increase students' interest and involvement. To increase the interest in class, using authentic materials suitable for their levels, such as recordings and visual aids, would be a good strategy.

6.3.3.3 Students' perceptions and SLA

Furthermore, the findings could lead to the conclusion that their students held a more open mind in accepting communicative approaches, which was also new to them, than their teachers. As the observations reveal, communicative activities had not been employed before the intervention cycles. To the action research students, this approach was also new. This shares some similarities to Dam and Gabrielsen's (1988) findings that it is far more difficult for teachers to redefine their roles in the implementation of task-based approaches than it is for their learners.

For many incidences in interviews, the students' suggestions unexpectedly conformed to communicative approaches. In SWI3, the students stated that they did not like it when Wendy asked them to learn grammar rules by heart; they explained that this way of learning lacks repetition and sufficient exposure. This conforms well to the input hypothesis (Krashen, 1981) which highlights

repetitions as important language input. Also, the FonM mode, which underlines the Natural approach, emphasises the importance of exposure to language learning (Long, 2000). When Diana's students were asked about what learning they perceived from the jigsaw activity in O2, they claimed enthusiastically that they can better retain (schema-building) by reading to and listening to others; this describes the process of schema building.

Another example is when Wendy was not aware of the activity of 'listen and draw' having a potential as a communicative activity as they provide information gaps between the students, and simply treated it as an activity for students to recite the reading text in an amusing way. Interestingly, her students suggested that this activity should be introduced earlier before they are familiar with the text, so the student would listen actively, rather than ignoring what is being said and drawing from their own memory (in SWI4). This is how information gap activities work. From these examples, the interviewed students, who had not received any training in SLA, seemed to have more implicit knowledge of L2 teaching and learning than their teachers; I found this finding novel.

6.3.3.4 Teachers' interactive manners matter

This study leads to the conclusion that in general, there were no evident learners' factors which would hinder the implementation of communicative approaches. Instead, this study identified issues in teachers' interactive manners that discourage learner participation. One evident example is the short wait time for students to respond, perhaps due to the teachers' intolerance of silence, as Xie (2009) and Tan (2008) observed. This phenomenon was observed in Wendy's

and Diana's first observations. Wendy's students in the interviews frequently suggested that Wendy should allow more response time for slower learners. Another example is teachers' adherence to a pre-set agenda or standard answers; therefore, they tended to refuse or neglect their students' different ideas, as observed in Wendy's and Diana's first observed classes. This teaching feature was also observed by Tan (2008) and Xie (2009).

Teachers' interactive manners, or their communicative style, may have effects on students' motivational orientation (Noels *et al.*, 1999; Dörnyei, 1994). Students are likely to be intrinsically oriented when they are allowed to make their own decisions about their learning and are supported by their teacher with, for example, feedback. In contrast, when students find their teacher controlling, they may become less self-determinant and competent in their learning process. Similar observation was found earlier by Van Lier (1988 in Thornbury, 1996), who points out that predetermined turn talking causes significant reduction in motivation and attention.

A factor, 'unequal speaking opportunities afforded to each student by the teacher' noted in Tsui (1996), was pointed out by Wendy's students in the first two interviews. Wendy often used group competition and assigned scores. She chose students to answer and awarded their group with points. The students in SWI1 had some doubts about the fairness of nomination. They commented on being chosen by speed of response: 'Sometimes only students with higher ability can answer in time' (SWI2). Such a "habit" may be held by a teacher who tends to lead classes in a quick tempo. Wendy's students also found another factor which discouraged them from interacting in English- time pressure imposed by the teacher. In SWI4, the students expressed their willingness to try interacting in

English. However, in most cases of group activities, Wendy's rule was that the group which finishes first gets the points. This discourages students from making attempts to practise using the target language, and encourages them to use L1 to communicate since it is the quickest way.

The unequal speaking opportunities may be caused by the lack of instructions to inform the students of appropriate ways to work together, as observed in Diana's O1 and Ken's O5 where only one or two students in a group were engaged. The teacher could remind students to work cooperatively, and tell students some rules, e.g. everyone takes a sentence slip and reads it out to your group.

On the other hand, the students were observed to be lacking the habit of interacting with their teachers or peers in L2. Before this research started, the year 8 students had been through one year of English classes in which using L2 in interaction was not a requirement. Under such a circumstance, some activities can be applied: for example, guessing can make it easier for students to use only the target structure; information gap activities, such as messenger dictation, naturally push students to interact in the target structure. In addition, some activities can build up the habit and ability to negotiate meaning in L2, such as 'Kill the sentence/text' (Appendix 5.11). Furthermore, teachers need to teach the students how to negotiate meaning and provide them with strategies to engage in effective collaboration; also, teachers should constantly monitor and remind students to use English (Ellis, 2005).

6.3.4 Conclusion

This section finishes by summarising the findings related to the four main contextual factors from the literature: 1) challenges of traditional cultural beliefs,

2) time in school, 3) school and national examinations, 4) textbooks, and 5) learner factors. Firstly, regarding cultural challenges, this study observed that initially the teachers had practiced teacher-centred instruction, and the impression was that they saw themselves having obligations to transmit knowledge. These may be influenced by traditional Chinese instruction, as noted in Hu (2002) and Rao (1996), but there was no direct proof. However, as illustrated in 6.1.3, these beliefs could be realigned with their developing knowledge in designing and employing varied communicative activities.

Time constraints in school, school and national examinations, and textbooks were challenging for the teachers whose knowledge of communicative approaches was not well-developed. Teachers need to possess sufficient practitioner knowledge to deal with them. The teachers in this study previously did not have the knowledge to decide the length of communicative activities according to time available. School examinations were not seen evidently affecting the implementation of communicative approaches, even though the exams are only marginally related to testing communicative abilities. However, the teachers in this study, more or less, felt that they had an obligation to explain and transmit knowledge. This belief leads to teacher-centred approach (Mangubhai et al., 2007), and their dominant interactive manners may discourage learners' participation (Xie, 2009).

In relation to learner factors, the findings give me the confidence to conclude that if learners in this research context are considered as a contextual factor, they are positive impacts rather than hindering factors. This study finds mismatches between teachers' and students' expectations. The learners' willingness to communicate indicates no conflicts with traditional cultural beliefs and values.

Diana's other role as a consultant of the MOE Advisory team may provide a more macro view on contexts. This role required her to tutor novice teachers at her school and other schools in her city. She often shared with me that she applied what she had learnt in this programme to tutoring. She informed me that the communicative activities, which she demonstrated to other teachers, were very popular with them, and they perceived no difficulties in carry them out. The head teacher in Diana's school, who used to be an English teacher, once observed and was impressed by the activities that Diana showed. This information was provided by John and confirmed by Diana.

The findings from this investigation lead to certain implications and recommendations for relevant stakeholders in similar settings and beyond. These are presented in the final chapter.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore whether a reflective action research through a teacher development programme could help teachers develop their practitioner knowledge in communicative approaches and achieve a synergy between their beliefs and practice within their own particular teaching context. The investigation has led to certain findings. In this chapter, I summarise the main findings, and highlight the implications of this study for practitioners, TD/TE programmes and policy makers, and make recommendations for future research. This will end with a discussion of this study's contributions to knowledge in the field.

7.2 Summary of main findings

The investigation of RQ1 leads to the conclusion that the teachers started with a limited understanding and knowledge of communicative approaches. This seems to be a more dominant factor than teachers' beliefs in this research context. During the TD programme practitioner knowledge growth in adapting communicative approaches can be clearly seen. The investigation of RQ 2 leads to the conclusion that within the framework of action research, the planned programme, the effective reactive adjustments and the strategies developed by me were the factors which contributed to teachers' knowledge growth. Cooperative learning among the teachers and assistance of an expert also helped make the TD programme work. The teachers also learnt from examples and from practising those examples in their real context.

The findings from RQ3 indicate that there were overwhelmingly affirmative responses towards the teachers' inclusion of communicative activities from a total of 45 interviewed students (50% of the student participants). This study also traced whether students' attitudes changed over the five-month duration of the study by conducting two questionnaires at the beginning and the end. The findings show that the students' preference for communicative activities, their belief that they could learn more with communicative approaches and do so in more interesting ways all increased. Interestingly, many suggestions from the learners conform to the principles underlying the approaches. While this study finds that there were no contextual constraints to discourage learners from participating communicative approaches, it nonetheless finds that the teachers' lack of understanding of the approaches resulted in their perception of time, syllabus/textbooks and learners as negative contextual factors.

Synthesizing the findings of the RQs, two main conclusions can be drawn: communicative approaches are beneficial for both teachers and their students, and there are gaps that need to be bridged. The teacher development component of action research showed that these approaches also benefit teachers. The teachers became more confident in what they were doing, and believed that their classroom teaching was more effective. They became less worried that their learners would reject communicative approaches, or be unable to take part in communicative activities. Witnessing both more capable students and less capable ones reengaged in classroom activities, the teachers started to plan for better classroom interaction and develop more skills in handling the process of communicative activities. The study also finds gaps which need to be bridged; for example, the gap between teachers' knowledge and practice, and students' habits in interactions with their teachers or peers in L2 and ideal

behaviour. Ways to bridge the gaps were suggested to the teachers and presented in Chapter 5 and 6. This thesis provides a whole picture of this research context. It set out to understand the situations and effort put into the dynamic research, through the TD programme, to make teacher learning happen and implement communicative approaches within the constraints of the context. Certain implications can be made to stakeholders, as summarised below.

7.3 Implications for practitioners

To summarise, the value of communicative approaches concluded in this research are congruent with relevant literature. Firstly, traditional instruction raises questions about learning opportunities and learnability and related ethical and moral issues, as discussed in Section 3.4.3. Secondly, gains in learning the L2 as well as motivation increase with communicative approaches. Thirdly, the teachers also benefit.

A teacher-centred mode deprives students of opportunities to be active learners. If the 'ownership' of classroom discourse is mainly controlled by teachers, motivation and attention is lost (Van Lier 1988; Thornbury, 1996). This study finds that going beyond the teachers' agenda, teaching materials, or syllabus, and following topics or contents chosen by learners, may interest the learners and result in their increased involvement. As an ethical and moral issue, most high school students learn English in private language schools which emphasise speaking. Therefore, not arranging interactive classroom activities is to deter the continuous development of their speaking skills.

Beliefs in a structured syllabus also lead to ethical and moral issues in terms of learnability. Ellis (2010) argues that much L1 and L2 learning is not intentional, but incidental (i.e. occurs while doing something else), and implicit. Incidental learning underlies the principal reasons for tasks. Ellis (2010) concludes that 'learners will only succeed in developing full control over their linguistic knowledge if they experience trying to use it under real operating conditions'; and that 'true interlanguage development can only take place when acquisition happens incidentally, as a product of the effort to communication' (p. 38). Reflecting on their insights, the teachers and I discussed how we teachers believe in a structured syllabus; we believe what we teach should be what is learnt. If the students do not learn, we assume that these students do not work hard, or are very passive.

The teachers in this study worried whether their learners could learn form without explicit teaching. Although there is evidence showing that teaching grammar explicitly helps learning in some ways (Ellis, 2006), it can be concluded that the learners in this research were not interested in explicit teaching. In such a case, an incidental focus-on-form (FonF) approach which promotes integration of grammar or other form with meaningful use may be more suitable in this context. Actually, some communicative activities have the potential to replace form-focused instruction, such as structured-input (SI) tasks, and consciousness-raising (CR) tasks (Ellis, 2010), as exemplified in Chapters 3 and 5.

Additionally, form can be learnt more effectively thorough feedback. Ellis (2006) supports Long's (2000) views that grammar can be taught and acquired through corrective feedback either implicitly or explicitly. As Lyster and Mori (2006)

conclude, 'classroom studies of reactive form-focused instruction have demonstrated that oral feedback has a significant effect on L2 development in a variety of instructional settings, ranging from university-level foreign language classrooms to elementary classrooms that involve content-based ESL, communicative ESL, and French immersion' (p. 275).

That communicative approaches lead to gains in learning the L2 and enhancing motivation was identified by not only the students, but also the teachers and this is common in the literature. Motivation turned out to be closely associated with students' perception of communicative approaches when setting out to investigate RQ3. Enhancing motivation was mentioned both by the teachers and the students. Diana and Ken noticed that communicative approaches involved students in learning and motivation. They witnessed that higher levels of learners re-engaged in class activities, and lower levels of learners participated due to group members' assistance. Communicative approaches/tasks turned out to be a solution for mixed-levelled classes. That more learners discussed actively in class was not seen before in their class. This benefit of tasks was noted also by a participant in Wyatt's study (2009) who developed her practical knowledge of CLT. To quote her, '[Tasks]They provide opportunities "for learners to practise their English in a funny and interesting way," they increased motivation by encouraging a focus on meaning, they could be based on topics relating to learners' life experiences, which made "learners willing to express their feelings and ideas,"...' (p.16).

For the practical ways of conducting communicative activities, Dörnyei (1994) provides suggestions: designing or selecting varied activities which are challenging and cater to the students' interests; including some imaginative

elements that will engage students' emotions; leaving activities and conclusions open-ended and uncertain; personalising tasks by encouraging students to engage in meaningful exchanges, such as sharing personal information; and making use of peer interaction. Additionally, allowing students to perform or display their products will improve students' satisfaction. The teachers followed some of my suggestions, which were similar to those of Dörnyei's, and the students responded well.

It was not the approaches per se that the TD programme aimed to provoke; it was equally important for teachers to understand a variety of theories and approaches to better inform their knowledge bases (Van Manen, 1995). However, time constraints and exam orientation would reduce teachers' willingness to use communicative approaches. I support Hunter's (2013: 479) advice: 'Prepare the student for life, not just for tomorrow's test'. The suggestion made in 3.2.3 for the Taiwanese school context seems practical: when teachers have to follow the textbooks closely, a practical approach is to leave some time free for unexpected detours, such as learners asking questions.

7.4 Implications for organising TD/TE programme

Several suggestions can be made for future TD/TE programmes. Firstly, during the five-month intervention, many expected and unexpected factors emerged. My actions to deal with these were similar to Carr and Kemmis' (1986) description of the procedures of AR: the researchers reflect critically on the situational constraints, attempt to understand how these constraints act on people, consider practical potential strategic actions to change the way these

constraints limit their action and observe the consequences of this action systematically. As discussed in 6.2.7, AR has the capacity to deal with the complexity of teacher learning.

Secondly, for teachers to make an attempt to employ communicative approaches, firstly they need to understand it before the mental process (how the new item supports, fits or competes with their existing belief system) starts. Without understanding, the teacher may wrongly reject the new item. Ways to encourage their understanding are suggested: starting with examples, experiencing and reflecting with the aid of a collaborative approach. This study found that some teachers prefer examples to theories, which presents another way of connecting theory and practice. It is evident in this study that the teachers' practitioner knowledge was developed when they learnt from practical examples and from practising those examples. This seemed to be the case when Diana demonstrated communicative activities to the English teachers of other schools, who showed high enthusiasm and viewed them practically.

Thirdly, using a collaborative approach rather than top-down mode contributed significantly to teacher learning. To promote discussions in workshops, I described the activities each teacher did since not all the teachers observed their peers' class. I also pointed out good points and selected some events for discussion. Peers' views and the students' views were added to help the teachers understand students' thoughts, and this opened a door for the observed teachers to include other people's views to avoid being confined to themselves. I think this is the benefit a teacher professional programme should offer. This TD programme provided what Brookfield (1995) calls critical reflection,

which should include the critical reflective lenses of the students' eyes, colleagues' experience and theoretical literature. This TD programme also provided a platform to co-construct knowledge and action with colleagues, which is in line with Dewey's original ideas about reflection (Mann & Walsh, 2013). However, time is essential to have sufficient reflection activities.

Another suggestion is the use of an observation scheme for TD/TE programmes. The application of this framework had two purposes; as well as evaluating teachers' practice, it can be used for coaching teachers in the use of the communicative approaches by providing a framework for planning and reviewing their own practice. This framework has fewer items compared with Mangubhai *et al.*'s (2007) list of CLT attributes, which identifies as many as 62 criteria. This observation scheme was introduced to the teacher participants in the first workshop for overview. The teacher educator can let the teachers brainstorm what teachers can do in teacher talking time (TTT) to encourage their students' contributions, or ways to increase learners' use of L2 in discussion, for example. They can then compare their ideas with the relevant literature, such as Mangubhai *et al.*'s detailed list.

The results from applying the observation scheme support the view that classroom discourse should be viewed as dynamic, and observed from an inductive approach. It was expected that the teachers' development would be observed by increasing the extent of FonM instruction, i.e. from the left to the right of Littlewood's continuum (3.2.1.2). However, it transpired that their knowledge developed in terms of the quality of teacher talk and employing group work with improved skills in management and promoting interaction, as well as in

terms of increasing student-centred teaching. In other words, the teachers' knowledge growth cannot be evaluated quantitatively.

7.5 Implications for policy makers

This collaborative professional development enhanced individual learning as well as serving the shared goal of a national curriculum. This study concludes that communicative approaches are beneficial for both teachers and learners, and these findings are supported with a body of relevant past studies and theories. Those governments who have placed these approaches as national guidelines should make more effort with its implementation, not simply keeping the guidelines as rhetoric. Four suggestions for doing this follow.

Firstly, the governments should investigate the phenomena, and fund AR through TD programmes. This AR study could serve as a model for this process. The mode of TD could be integrated into existing official TD programmes, such as the fortnightly seminars in this research setting. AR is worthwhile and according to Zeichner (1993), most teachers he knew who have experienced action research would continue using it.

For both pre- and in-service TE, conferences, workshops or seminars need to be conducted by experts in the school or outside the school who have sufficient practitioner knowledge and can help teachers develop and implement the approach.

Secondly, I suggest that textbooks should be communicative-approach based, and that the MOE request textbook publishers to hold orientation sessions and require the teachers to attend. The argument for textbook publishers to provide

examples of communicative approaches is supported in the literature. Commercial textbooks are often compiled with a carefully developed syllabus, are coherent in structure, and often developed by experts who bring new theories and approaches. If teachers follow such textbooks, then they are involved in scientifically based teaching (Richards, 1998). It is suggested that any textbook which follows a new approach should explain the approach well in the teacher's book; this way it is similar to a form of professional development (Nunan, 1991 in McGrath, 2002).

Furthermore, as Brumfit (1979 cited in McGrath, 2002: 10) suggests, coursebook materials should include 'resource packs, sets of materials with advice to teachers on how to adapt and modify the contents'. This could allow flexibility for local needs and learners' different attributes. Carless (2003) observed that the task-based textbooks used in the primary schools where they carried out their research provided suggestions for tasks and some relevant materials. Some teachers stated that this saved time in designing activities, and one teacher declared that preparation was not an issue for her. The input provided in this TD programme possessed those features of approach-based materials and resources.

Thirdly, school exams and the national exams should include listening and speaking tests to encourage teachers not to neglect their importance. Finally, a reward system may also help. Teachers need motivation and a compelling sense of responsibilities to help them develop (Brown, 1995) and a reward scheme may provide as an important extrinsic motivation.

7.6 Limitation of this study and recommendations for further research

The main limitation in this study was a result of the time constraints in workshop. As the data reveal, teachers' lack of understanding was a more dominant factor than their beliefs in the successful implementation of communicative approaches. More time was needed to help teachers to understand communicative approaches, by asking questions, sharing experiences and so on. However, within the short time frame in the workshops, I had to adjust my plans to maximize the workshops. First, some procedures had to be left out. This was done by prioritising the planned procedures according to their importance for the teachers, and the appropriateness for them to do them collaboratively, or to read the data on their own. I selected sharing experiences or experiments, a key element in the reflective model, and reporting students' feedback from interviews as a priority. As the data has revealed, teacher learning from experience is evident. The rest of the time was left to accomplish the goal of providing knowledge of communicative approaches as lack of understanding is evident in this study.

The adjustments were also made to content and the ways to provide the input data. The original plan was to have a balance of videos and written records such as transcriptions of lessons or lesson plans. In reality, the videos were often replaced with written alternatives. As discussed earlier, this would not be considered to have a large impact. Furthermore, some materials about the relevant knowledge or feedback had to be left to the teachers to study on their own. Those materials were detailed and informative. The experience with John suggests this compensative method can still work to some extent if the teacher took some time to read the materials and discuss with me and the peers. Indeed,

all the teachers adapted some examples, either for their worksheet or class, indicating they read some of these materials. Often asking me for more materials, John conducted his own action research before the end of the first research cycle.

Additionally, if they could have designed lesson plans together in the workshops, they would learn more effectively. It is unquestionable that all the teacher participants were responsible teachers who always prepare for lessons. However, if teachers can plan lessons in a workshop, they can share their ideas and feedback with each other. Loop input can be employed more frequently to enable the teachers to try the procedures of activities, and make adjustments. This helps teachers to be well-prepared and enhances their confidence in implementing communicative approaches. Furthermore, as Wallace (1990) points out, teacher education courses would show little gain in leaving the application of academic information to practice to the trainees themselves; the application is usually such a sophisticated operation that most trainees need guidance to achieve.

Due to time constraints, the reflective activities had to be removed. Reflection could be covered to some extent through sharing and discussing their teaching events. I expected that group discussion could help teachers understand their beliefs and reflect on them. In practice, the time in the workshops was often too short for the in-depth reflection to happen in discussion. More frequently, the teachers restricted reflection to the first level. They often reflected on the methods, the reasons for doing them, and evaluated their performance. If time allowed, a teacher educator could usually easily guide teachers to proceed to Level Three reflection. However, the impact of the adjustment was less

significant, since the study discovered that the main problem for implementation of communicative approaches lies more in understanding of them than teachers' beliefs.

Another limitation was that the teachers often attempted new, different activities in each observation; they seldom recycled the same or similar types of activities. Therefore, it is difficult to compare whether they had made progress on the practitioner knowledge from repetition of activities. For example, Ken pointed out some improvements that could be made in the future for his 'messenger dictation' activity, but he did not use this activity in the subsequent lessons.

For further research, I recommend using this TD mode to study any teacher professional development programmes. The design/methodology, the methods and the input used in the TD programme, and the strategies employed to respond to the reality contribute to teachers' practitioner knowledge growth. Taking a complexity theory viewpoint, one should be aware that any attempt to understand teacher learning by adopting only a subsystem level should be understood as incomplete, partial, and biased. Therefore, there is a need for longitudinal studies to trace teachers' development to find out whether the changes could be long term. Further research on a larger scale is recommended.

7.7 Contributions to knowledge in the field

There is a huge research gap in the study of the implementation of communicative approaches worldwide, as noted in Chapter One. CLT and TBLT have been a focus of active research and publication from the 1980s onwards in the TESOL area (Kumaravadivela, 2006). I have argued that the status accorded

to the approaches results from their strong theoretical bases, which are congruent with important theories and hypotheses in the area of SLA. Even though their principles are compelling, some past studies detail considerable discussion as to their acceptability and adaptability in a number of EFL contexts. However, those studies are rather fragmented. My study recognised that teacher learning involves many factors interacting together in a complex manner. A conclusion may not be trustworthy when it is drawn from a study which merely looks at teachers' beliefs and their practice without addressing, for example, whether teachers have fully understood these approaches. Similarly, a conclusion that communicative approaches are not suitable for learners in certain contexts is not convincing when drawn from a study in which no appropriate teacher education programmes were provided to practitioners.

Instead, this study attempted to take a more holistic approach to investigating this issue. It examined all the possible factors which impede the implementation of communicative approaches. The conclusions are drawn from considering the approaches themselves, factors related to teachers as well as to students, the particular context (i.e. the school) and wider context (i.e. pre-service and in-service teacher education programs, and the national guidelines). The time spent on this research also matters since a prolonged study may produce more insights into this issue.

While this study addresses this research gap, it also contributes to knowledge in the fields of TESOL methodology, teachers' beliefs and teacher knowledge, as well as teacher education. This knowledge is what Biesta and Burbules (2003) and Carr (2007) called 'practical knowledge', meaning knowledge generated from educational research which is relevant for practitioners and policy makers.

This study found that communicative approaches were perceived to be beneficial by both teachers and learners. Chapter Five presents a detailed description of teaching activities with a discussion of their advantages and disadvantages, which are proposed as a reference for teachers in Taiwanese contexts and beyond. This thesis has also provided data to show how teachers can learn about an innovative pedagogy. These teachers learnt the approaches through their practical application; their practical knowledge was developed through collaborative learning between the teachers and the assisting expert. The observation framework developed for this study has the potential to illustrate and analyse teachers' lessons which are dynamic in nature. This study also addresses the research gap in the application of PK and PCK in TESOL. Chapter Six discussed how the TD programme was conducted under the framework of reflective practice and sociocultural theory by means of action research to make the programme effective. These data ranges from new findings to those add to depth to existing literature.

Appendix 1.1

MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses.



Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications> and view the School's Policy online.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: Yi-Mei Chen

Your student no: 600042292

Return address for this certificate: 32 Pamela Road, EX1 2UF, Exeter

Degree/Programme of Study: PhD in TESOL

Project Supervisor(s): Susan Riley

Your email address: yc315@ex.ac.uk

Tel: 07425247875

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed: Yi-Mei Chen date: 19, June, 2013

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: March 2013

Certificate of ethical research approval

TITLE OF YOUR PROJECT:

Collaborating with English teachers in developing and implementing a context-sensitive communicative approach in Taiwanese EFL secondary school classes

1. Brief description of your research project:

This project is to explore whether reflective action research through a teacher development programme can help teachers in adapting the main features of the communicative approach (CA) to their own appropriate pedagogy within their context. This project will be realised through a series of workshops, observation of teaching and continual reflection in the setting of a government secondary school in Taiwan in September 2013.

2. Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

In this collaborative action research, there are two sets of participants.

A) Teachers: the researcher will cooperate with three volunteer teachers in a junior high school to implement communicative approaches in one of their year 7 or year 8 classes. Each class has an average of 40 students.

B) Students: approximately 120 students aged 13-15 in 3 classes taught by the participating teachers will be involved.

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:

3. informed consent: Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document. Each consent form MUST be personalised with your contact details.

There is a separate Consent form for teachers, students, and students' parents (consent forms attached).

The details of data collection will be explained to them and they will be informed that the data is for the use of the doctoral study only. They will be told that they may withdraw from the study at any time.

4. Anonymity and confidentiality

One of the most important tasks is to protect the participants' identity. Anonymity and confidentiality will be used to ensure the identity of the participants will not be accessed. The teachers will be referred to using pseudonyms at all times in the thesis, and if students are referred to individually it will be with the use of codes. I will try to ensure that individual teachers and students are not identifiable in the finished thesis. Records of the data collected (including transcripts and any audio recordings) will be stored in a secure and safe place. Electronic information will only be accessed by the researcher with her username and password. This information will be stored on a secure system with recognised virus protection. Electronic and paper information will be locked in a secure building. Information will also be coded to ensure anonymity. This will remain anonymous in the write up of the research. Collected written information will be destroyed by shredding and securely disposing when it is no longer required. Any audio recording will also be disposed of digitally.

5. Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress: Data Collection

To understand teachers' and students' beliefs and attitudes towards different teaching modes, questionnaires, interviews, and observations will be used as research methods.

Questionnaires: the students will be asked to complete two short questionnaires, before the first observation and after the final one.

Interviews: teachers will have a series of interviews linked with the observations as part of the cyclical nature of action research. A number of students may be interviewed in a focus group after each observation.

Observations: Three classes will be observed five times each. Classes will be videoed for the observation.

Before starting the investigation, the participants will be informed of what the research is about including any aspects that may influence their willingness to participate, and of their right to reject and withdraw. Also, all recordings will be made only with participants' permission. Rather than merely getting permission, other considerable ethical considerations should be followed as well, for example, respect, confidentiality and anonymity.

Data Analysis

Questionnaire data using Likert scale responses will be analysed using descriptive statistics and open questions will be analysed qualitatively for themes. With the consent of participants, the interview data collected will be recorded and transcribed. An observation scheme will be used to code the data. Data from both interview and observations will then be coded thematically using NVivo. Differences among views of participants will be explored. These views will be paramount in this study. I will ensure that these are listened to, respected, represented and acted upon and reported in confidentiality and anonymity.

6. Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project - e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires, or

During the data collection, data analysis and write up, data (audio recordings, interview data and individual data) will be securely stored in a locked cabinet in a safe place. Interview data and individual data will be stored separately. As previously mentioned, electronic information will only be accessed by the researcher with their username and password. Electronic information will also be stored on a secure system, within a locked building with recognised virus protection. It will be destroyed when it is no longer required.

7. special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.

The research will be conducted in the participants' school, i.e. in natural settings. I will confirm that everything is in place for students with special needs at the school.

8. Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

This action research aims to facilitate school teachers to gain the knowledge of the communicative approach (CA). This approach is promoted by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan and I personally believe that this approach is what the EFL learners need. However, in this study, the teachers are not asked to change their way of teaching; rather, it is suggested that they incorporate some elements of CA which they believe practical and workable for their practice. The researcher will work with the practitioners closely to provide materials they need, as well as moral support, and make suggestions when problems emerge.

It is possible that the changes in instruction might negatively affect students' test achievement. The researcher will take necessary actions to avoid this. Due to the dynamic and shifting nature of the action research process, ethical orientation is fundamental and will be considered during the study all the time.

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: September 2013 until: June 2014

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): S.H. Riley date: 9th July 2013

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.

GSE unique approval reference: D/12/13/46

Signed: N. Brown date: 26/7/13
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

Appendix 1.2

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

Title of Research Project

Collaborating with English teachers in developing and implementing a context-sensitive communicative approach in Taiwanese EFL secondary school classes

Details of Project

This project is to explore whether reflective action research through a teacher development programme can help teachers in adapting the main features of the communicative approach (CA) to their own appropriate pedagogy within their context. This project will be set up in SanMin Junior High School in Taiwan in September 2013.

During the project, I will facilitate the teacher participants to gain the knowledge of CA and develop their pedagogy. Also, I will observe the teachers and their students in class, and then I will interview them about their feelings and attitudes towards these classes.

Contact Details

For further information about the research or your interview data, please contact:

Yi-Mei Chen, Graduate School of Education, Exeter University, Devon UK.

Tel: 00 44 (0) 1392 263240 +886918696660 Email: yc315@ex.ac.uk

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:

Dr. Susan Riley, Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter, EX1 2LU, Holnicote 102 Tel: 00 44 (0) 1392 (72)4899 Email: S.M.Riley@ex.ac.uk

Confidentiality

Interview tapes and transcripts will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes described above and third parties will not be allowed access to them (except as may be required by the law). However, you will be supplied with a copy of your interview transcript so that you can comment on and edit it if it does not represent your views (please give your email below). Your data will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act for five years and then destroyed on an anonymous basis.

Anonymity

Interview data will be held and used on an anonymous basis, with no mention of your name, but we will refer to the group of which you are a member. Pseudonyms will be used to refer to individuals.

Consent

I voluntarily agree to participate and to the use of my data for the purposes specified above. I can withdraw consent at any time by contacting the interviewer.

TICK HERE: ☒

DATE.....2nd, Sep. 2013

Note: Your contact details are kept separately from your interview data

Name of interviewee: Gladys Zhou

Signature: 周凤霞

Email/phone: 05511663@yahoo.com.tw

Signature of researcher: Yi-Mei Chen

2 copies to be signed by both interviewee and researcher, one kept by each.

訪談同意書

研究專題

協同教師發展適地適宜的溝通教學法於國中英語課程

研究專案細節

此博士論文研究是探討是否透過行動研究 (Action research) 作為教師專業發展活動之部分，可協助老師發展適地適宜的溝通教學法。本研究將於 2013 年九月於新竹市三民國中進行。

於研究進行期間，我會協助老師了解溝通教學法，及指導老師整合溝通教學法的要素，發展出適地適宜教學法。此外，我會觀察上課，訪談師生對於課程的看法。

聯絡方式

若您對此研究計畫或訪談有任何疑問，請與
陳儀昭 聯絡。Tel 00 44 (0) 1392 263240 +886918696660 郵箱 yc315@ex.ac.uk
英國 Devon 郡 Exeter 大學 教育研究所

若您欲與 Exeter 大學的其他相關人士討論對此研究計畫之任何疑問，請與
Dr. Susan Riley 聯絡。Tel 00 44 (0) 1392 (72)4899 郵箱 S.M.Riley@ex.ac.uk
英國 Devon 郡 Exeter 大學 教育研究所 EX1 2LU, Holnicote 102

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匿名

訪談資料將以匿名保管及使用，並不會提及您的姓名，但研究者仍會提及您所在的團體。

同意

本人自願參與此研究計畫，並同意研究者使用我所提供之資訊，作為上述用途之使用。本人若不願再參與，可在告知研究者後，在任何階段退出。

請打勾: ☒

日期: 2013.9.12

注意: 您的訪談資料及聯絡方式將分別保存

參與訪談者: 周鳳瑛

參與訪談者簽名: 周鳳瑛

郵箱/電話: C5511663@yahoo.com.tw

研究者簽名: Y. Mei Lam

本同意書一式兩份，一份交由參與者，一份交由研究者保管



GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Title of Research Project:

Collaborating with English teachers in developing and implementing a context-sensitive communicative approach in Taiwanese EFL secondary school classes

CONSENT FORM: participants' parents / guardians

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

there is no compulsion for my daughter / son to participate in this research project and, if s/he does choose to participate, s/he may at any stage withdraw their participation

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about my daughter / son

any information which my daughter / son gives will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications or academic conference or seminar presentations

if applicable, the information, which my daughter / son gives, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form

all information my daughter / son gives will be treated as confidential

the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my daughter's / son's anonymity

王大仁
(Signature of parent / guardian)

01/08/2013
(Date)

王大仁
(Printed name of parent / guardian)

王大仁
(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participants' parent or guardian; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)

Contact phone number of researcher(s): +44-7-425247875(UK) +886-9-18696660 (Taiwan)

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

..... Yi-Mei Chen yc315@ex.ac.uk

* when research takes place in a school, the right to withdraw from the research does NOT usually mean that pupils or students may withdraw from lessons in which the research takes place

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.



GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

EXETER 大學 教育研究所

同意書

本人已充分了解此計畫的目標及目的。

本人明瞭：

本人子女不具義務參予此研究計畫，一但選擇參予，本人子女可以在任何階段退出

本人保有拒絕任何公開出版有關本人子女資訊的權利

本人子女所提供之任何資訊僅供此研究計畫目的包含出版之用

以適用為前提，本人子女所提供之資訊可以匿名之方式供此計畫之其他研究者使用

本人子女所提供之任何資訊將視為機密

研究者將盡一切努力維護本人子女之匿名

王大同
.....
(參予者之家長/監護人簽名)

2013.9.1
.....
(日期)

王大同
.....
參予者之家長/監護人姓名

王大凱
.....
參予者姓名

* 此研究於課堂內進行，貴子弟有權拒絕接受訪談及觀察，但不能退出校內的正常時間內之英語課程

本同意書一式兩份，一份交由參予者之家長/監護人，一份交由研究者保管

研究者聯絡電話：+44-7 425247875 (UK) ; +886-9-18696660 (Taiwan)

若對此研究計畫有任何疑問，請與

顏義同 聯絡 yc315@ex.ac.uk

資料保護法：Exeter 大學於1998年之資料保護法已於資料保護委員會辦事處註冊，合法收集資料。您所提供之任何資訊僅供此研究目的之用，且依照大學註冊程序及目前資料保護法。研究者將視此資訊為機密文件並，未徵求參予者同意，不得揭露予未授權之第三者。關於此資訊之報告均以匿名呈現。

Appendix 2.1 The scope and sequence of the textbook

課程大綱 Syllabus						
課別	主題	溝通功能	文法要點	句型	發音	十大基本能力
Lesson 1	I Joined a Summer Camp	談論過去活動	過去簡單式 (規則動詞) 肯定句：過去式 with 問句及答句的用法	-What did you do yesterday? I watched movies.	/dɪ-/ /w-/	4. 表達、溝通與分享 5. 尊重、關懷與團隊合作 10. 獨立思考與解決問題
Lesson 2	Did You See a Doctor?	描述過去事件	過去簡單式 (不規則動詞)：肯定句 did 的問句與答句；用連接詞 because、so 表達因果關係	-Did you see a doctor last night? Yes, I did. (I saw a doctor.) -I didn't come to school because I was sick.	/sp-/ /dɪ-/ /sk-/	4. 表達、溝通與分享 5. 尊重、關懷與團隊合作
Lesson 3	Before He Became a Great Inventor, He Failed Many Times	描述人物活動與事物變化	選擇詞 when、before、after 的用法	-I read about him when I was in elementary school. -After he finished the test, he checked the answers.	/sp-/ /sɪ-/ /dɪ-/	3. 生涯規劃與終身學習 5. 尊重、關懷與團隊合作 7. 規劃、組織與實踐 10. 獨立思考與解決問題
Review 1						
Lesson 4	I Was Sleeping When You Called	談論過去某時正在進行的活動	過去進行式：用連接詞 when 連接同時發生的動作或活動	-What were you doing then? I was sleeping. -I was reading a book when the teacher called.	Flaps	2. 欣賞、表現與創新 4. 表達、溝通與分享
Lesson 5	What Do You Plan to Do?	討論想法、表達意願與喜好	不定詞 接受動或主詞；以代詞 不定詞	-I want to do my homework. -To help people is great. -It is great to help people.	Linking	5. 尊重、關懷與團隊合作 10. 獨立思考與解決問題
Lesson 6	My Mother Enjoys Baking	談論中外的飲食習慣並比較其異同	動名詞 受動或主詞	-I enjoy playing the violin. -Using chopsticks is difficult for me.	Linking: Sound Change	2. 欣賞、表現與創新 4. 表達、溝通與分享 6. 文化學習與國際理解
Review 2						
Lesson 7	How Often Do You Brush Your Teeth?	談論個人日常生活習慣及其頻率	頻率副詞：How often...? 的用法；使役動詞	-I seldom get up early on Sundays. -I am always busy after school. -How often do you go to the gym? -Ms. Li let the students do the work.	Syllable	1. 瞭解自我與發展潛能 4. 表達、溝通與分享
Lesson 8	What's the Weather Like in Australia?	談論月份及氣候	What's the weather like? 與 How's the weather? 的用法；rain 與 snow 當動詞的用法	-How's the weather in Australia in summer? -It's sunny. -It rains a lot in spring. -We have a lot of snow in winter.	Stress	4. 表達、溝通與分享 6. 文化學習與國際理解
Lesson 9	What Are You Going to Do Tomorrow?	談論未來計畫的目標與時程	未來式 (will、be going to) 與序數的用法	-Will you practice singing tomorrow? -He is (not) going to practice singing tomorrow.	Stress Pattern	1. 瞭解自我與發展潛能 3. 生涯規劃與終身學習 7. 規劃、組織與實踐
Review 3						

Appendix 2.2 The sample of a lesson in the textbook

Lesson 1

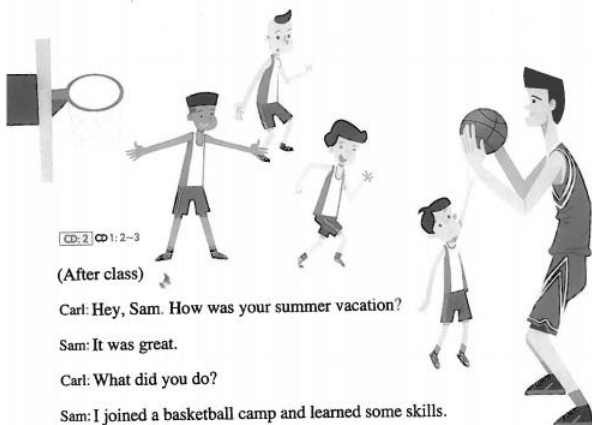
I Joined a Summer Camp

Warm-up

♥ What did they do this summer vacation?



Dialogue



CD 2 CD 1: 2-3

(After class)

Carl: Hey, Sam. How was your summer vacation?

Sam: It was great.

Carl: What did you do?

Sam: I joined a basketball camp and learned some skills.

Carl: That's cool! You can use them on the school team.

Sam: Yes, and guess what? Yao Ming visited our camp and played a game with us. It was really exciting.



Vocabulary CD 3 CD 1: 4

camp 營隊 skill 技巧
use 應用：使用
Guess what? 你猜怎麼著？

Carl: I learned about it from your Facebook yesterday. I envy you.

My summer was terrible.

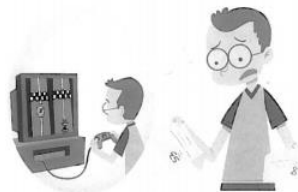
Sam: Really? What happened?

Carl: I failed English and math last semester. This summer, I studied those subjects in a cram school all day and prepared for tests at night.

Sam: Poor you.

Carl: Well, I asked for it. I played video games too much and didn't study hard.

* Facebook 臉書 (社群網站)



Vocabulary CD 3 CD 1: 4

yesterday 昨天	envy 羨慕	What happened? 發生了什麼事？
fail 不及格；失敗	last 前一個的；最後的	semester 學期
cram school 補習班	all 整個的；全部的	test 考試
Poor you. 你真可憐。	video game 電腦遊戲	study hard 用功
learn 得知；獲悉	I asked for it. 我自找的。	

True or False (聽 CD，與對話內容相符的寫 T，不符的寫 F。) CD 1: 5

1. 2. 3.

Reading

CAR WASH



CD 5 CD 1: 9-10

Part-time Jobs in Summer

Maggie and her friends joined a street dance club at school last semester. They learned a lot of dance skills in the club. This summer, the club needed a new CD player and new outfits for a talent show. For the money, Maggie and her friends worked different jobs.

Maggie worked part-time at her dad's car wash. Tim and Ivy walked dogs for their neighbors. Simon painted pictures for people. Finally, they earned enough money for the club. They were all tired but happy.

Now the club has a very nice CD player and cool outfits. All the students in the club are ready for the show.

Vocabulary CD 6 CD 1: 11

outfit (成套) 服裝	money 錢	neighbor 鄰居	picture 圖畫
earn 賺 (得)	tired 疲倦的	ready 準備好的	car wash 洗車場



Dear students,

My name is Yi-Mei Chen, and I am a PhD student in the University of Exeter in the UK. I would like to ask you several questions regarding English instruction, based on the needs of my research, which is a part of the requirements of my degree. This is not a test. Your teacher is helping me to give you this questionnaire, so he/she will not judge you by the information you provide, which is entirely for my research purpose. You can choose whether to participate or not, and your decision will not affect your score on the subject of English. However, I will be very grateful if you choose to participate. If you do, your name will not be given. I do appreciate if you can think carefully and try to answer as honestly as you can.

I would like to emphasise that participation is entirely voluntary. If you have any question when filling this questionnaire, please ask me. When you have finished, you can fold this questionnaire in half to make sure it is completely anonymous. Your participation will be highly appreciated.

Yi-Mei Chen

Part 1

In this part, you will find 12 statements about learning/teaching English which I would like you to read. For each statement, if you think it is very true about you, please circle

a strongly agree; **b** agree; **c** neutral; **d** disagree; **e** strongly disagree

Key: a = strongly agree;
 b = agree
 c = neutral
 d = disagree
 e = strongly disagree;

strongly agree strongly disagree

1	<i>I can try to answer my teacher's questions in English if I feel secure and encouraged to.</i>	a b c d e	
2	<i>I like the teacher often ask questions that are related to ourselves, for example, our interests, opinions, etc.</i>	a b c d e	
3	<i>I like the teacher to correct my oral mistake so that I can learn.</i>	a b c d e	
4	<i>I do not like the teacher to correct my oral mistakes because I feel I lose face in front of the class</i>	a b c d e	
5	<i>I believe I can learn English well by actively participating in interaction with the teacher or my peer.</i>	a b c d e	
6	<i>I like it when the teacher gives us communicative activities so we can interact in English with our classmates.</i>	a b c d e	
7	<i>I do not like to talk to my peer in English in class</i>	a b c d e	
8	<i>I do not like it when the teacher spends most of time teaching grammar rules.</i>	a b c d e	
9	<i>The teacher should design meaningful and purposeful language tasks for us to practice using English.</i>	a b c d e	
10	<i>I prefer to be quiet and just listen passively to the teacher</i>	a b c d e	
11	<i>The teacher should spend more time on role play or games than explicitly teaching sentence structures.</i>	a b c d e	
12	<i>The teacher should spend more time on group and pair work than drilling in sentence structures.</i>	a b c d e	

13. Please describe your opinions towards things you like and dislike and problems you have encountered so far in your English class in high school.

Things you like	
Thing you dislike	
Problems you have encountered	

(Adapted from Jarvis and Atsilarat, 2004).

14. From Q13 please describe things or activity you like and dislike including problems you have experienced in detail.

(Adapted from Jarvis and Atsilarat, 2004).

Part 2

Would you please complete the following information about yourself for the purpose of analysis.

Gender: Male / Female (please circle)

At what age did you start learning English? _____ years old

Do you have any other thoughts about English class and would like to share with me?

I sincerely appreciate your help. Thank you very much again.

問卷調查 Questionnaire

(Chinese version)

各位同學大家好:

在下陳儀眉,目前是英國艾克賽特大學(University of Exeter)的博士生,有一要事相求。基於我的研究需要,想請教你對英文教學的看法。我想對台灣英文教育有所貢獻,而此份問卷是非常重要的參考資料。此份問卷是設計是用來傾聽中學生的心聲,不是考試。由衷感謝你的參與。這份問卷是不需要填寫姓名,懇請你能仔細思考並誠實作答。

Part 1 在此部分有 12 題關於英文文法教學的陳述,請你仔細閱讀後判斷,如果你認為此陳述對你而言,非常同意,請圈選 **a**; 同意,則圈選 **b**; 不同意也不反對,圈選 **c**;

不同意,圈選 **d**; 非常不同意,則圈選 **e**.

- 選項 **a** = 非常同意
 b = 同意
 c = 不同意也不反對

d = 不同意

請圈選最適用你的看法的選項

e = 非常不同意

		非常同意 → → 非常不同意				
1	我可以試著以英文回答老師的問題，如果我覺得安全及受到鼓勵	a	b	c	d	e
2	我喜歡老師常問和我們自身有關的問題，如我的興趣、意見	a	b	c	d	e
3	我喜歡老師糾正我口語的錯誤 我才會進步	a	b	c	d	e
4	我不喜歡老師糾正我口語的錯誤 因為我會沒面子	a	b	c	d	e
5	我相信我能藉由積極與老師或同學交談以學好英文	a	b	c	d	e
6	我喜歡老師安排讓我們和同學以英文交談的活動	a	b	c	d	e
7	我不喜歡練習和同學以英文交談	a	b	c	d	e
8	我希望老師不要花大部分的時間在教文法規則	a	b	c	d	e
9	老師應該設計有意義及目的的活動，讓我們在達成目標時 同時練習說英文	a	b	c	d	e
10	我喜歡英文課不用開口說英文	a	b	c	d	e
11	老師應該用更多的上課時間在小組活動，而不是機械式的練習句型	a	b	c	d	e
12	老師應該用更多的上課時間在讓我們做角色扮演，而不是一直講解文法規則及句型	a	b	c	d	e

13. 請描述你到目前為止所經歷的國中英文課當中，你喜歡或不喜歡的部分/活動或困難

喜歡的事	
不喜歡的事	
覺得困難的部分	

14. 請你詳細描述上題(Q13) 所經歷的喜歡或不喜歡的部分/活動或困難

Part 2 基本資料

性別： 男 / 女 （請圈選）

你是幾歲開始學英文課的？_____

你有任何有關英文課的想法想告訴我嗎？

你願意進一步和研究者面談嗎？如果願意，請填寫 班級_____ 姓名_____

由衷感謝你的參與

Appendix 4.2 Questionnaire

1. Can you list changes your teacher made in this semester, and then evaluate how you like them? Please “√” in the appropriate box.

	Changes	Like very much	Like	Neutral	Dislike	Dislike very much
Ex	There is group work		√			
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

2. Think of something you can do now that you could not do in the beginning of the semester. Then write it.

3. How much has your English improved in each of these areas? Please “√” in the appropriate box.

Area	A lot of improvement	Some improvement	Little improvement
Listening			
Speaking			
Reading			
Writing			
Grammar			
Vocabulary			
Translation			

4. Which area(s) do you think you need to focus more on?

5. Following Q4, how do you think your teacher can help you with this area?

6. In the first questionnaire you wrote about some things that you like and dislike. Which of these, if any, would you change now?

For example,

Things you like: group work, free talk in English...

Things you don't like: listen to grammar instruction, tests....

Thank you very much.

Appendix 4.3 First interview with teachers

1. Which aspect of English as a subject do you think is the most important for junior high school students to learn?
2. Do you use CLT or TBLT in your teaching?
3. If Q2 is 'yes', would you give me some examples of how you do it?
4. Have you experienced any problems when implementing CLT in your classroom?
5. If Q2 is 'no',
 - A. Why not?
 - B. What challenges do the teachers think they will face if they adapt communicative approach (CA)?
6. Could you describe your English class when you were a student?
7. What do you think of 'professional growth'?
8. Educational background:
 - How many years of teaching experience?
 - Have you received CLT (or CA) training?

An example of transcription—Wendy

I: Thank you very much for participating in my research. The main purpose of this interview is to understand your views about- and experience of- communicative approaches. Do you mind if I record our interview? It is only an aid to my memory.

W: No problem.

I: Thank you very much. Should we start now?

W: Yes.

I: Which aspect of English as a subject do you think is the most important for junior high school students to learn?

W: To get them interested in English, basic communication abilities, grammar concepts.

I: Then, have you ever used CLT or TBLT in your teaching?

W: Yes

I: Could you give me some examples?

W: Actually, now textbooks are pretty much communicative based; so when I teach the dialogue, I try to do my best to encourage students to directly apply the sentences in the textbook to their personal situations and create their own dialogues; yes, in class, I always encourage groups to discuss, using as much English as possible. Then, more games were applied in year 7, for example, more open-ended, like, students need to walk around the classroom and find someone to practice English. I am not sure these count as communicative approaches.

I: Are there interactions?

W: Yes,

I: Using English?

W: Yes,

I: Basically, yes.

W: Basically, communicative approaches mean letting them interact. I encourage them to do so very often. One more example is, in year 7, I used PowerPoint Slides to introduce animals. Some animals' names are more difficult, so I encourage them, working as a group, to ask me questions. So they need to think in English about the questions and guess the meanings of the words. They could really ask me questions; I found this activity very interesting.

I: When you have been doing these communicative activities, have you ever experienced any challenges?

W: Yes. They don't speak, or they speak very quietly, very passive, and you need to keep reminding them, or don't speak English, they use Chinese. The biggest problem, I think, being passive is the biggest problem.

I: Could you describe your English class when you were a student? What was the teaching like?

W: I went to a normal class, with mixed ability students, in a junior high school. The teachers only taught based on the textbook. So I went to Buxiban. Because I went to Buxiban, English lessons at school were very simple to me. I couldn't learn a lot from school. The teacher took up a lot of the time with classroom management; some students slept in class. But, the teacher taught grammar and pronunciation very well, so that it built the foundations of my grammar and pronunciation. I learnt other skills, such as reading, from Buxiban. When I went to senior high school, I did not go to Buxiban; instead I went to KeJian (a private language school).....

I: Now, let's talk about teachers' professional growth.

W: Teachers' professional growth means...?

I: For example, do you like to gain in professional growth and how? Under what circumstances? Do you think it is necessary?

W: Yes, yes. I think professional growth is necessary, but nowadays the MOE's programmes do not always meet my needs, for teachers like me who have taught for many years, we can handle classes very well. What I need is more active and fun teaching, with some teachers sharing their experiences, tips of teaching the four skills, grouping, awarding, etc.

I: So you would be willing to attend under those circumstances?

W: Yes, I am willing to attend sessions where other experienced teachers share some information, experience and tips.

I: How many years of teaching experience do you have?

W: This is my twelfth years of teaching.

I: Wow! Have you received any formal CLT training, TBLT or training communicative approaches?

W: In university. That counts?

I: So you majored in English?

W: I majored in Education and minored in English.

I: Could you describe the courses with CLT? Were there practical applications or just theories?

W: No, mostly more theory-based.

I: Oh.

W: Actually, when I was in the summer school of the postgraduate programme in a Taiwanese Normal University, we had CLT as the focus.

I: So they focused on CLT.

W: My impression was that CLT was always the focus of these courses.

I: really?

W: Yes, it is always highly valued, popular- no matter what the area of teaching methods or materials. Everyone highlights communicative-approach styles. However, I feel it was rarely related to practice.

I: They did not show you much about the application of the theories?

W: It only left me with a very vague impression; I forget almost all the theories.

I: When did that happened? A the summer school.

W: The fourth or fifth year of my teaching career?

I: Have you ever tried to apply the theories to your teaching?

W: No, never, they were just theory to me.

I: That is all the questions I had aimed to ask. Thank you so much for your time.

W: No problem.

Appendix 4.4. The first interview schedule with students

1. Are there any differences (in this lesson or recently) have you noticed?
2. What part do you like?
3. What part do you dislike?
4. Do you have any recommendations or concerns?
5. Questions correspond to the observed lesson, i.e.,

Are the questions in the worksheet easy or difficult?

Do you chat in class? If so, under what situation?

Do you concentrate in class? If not, under what situation?

Are you willing to helping others or seeking for help in group activities?

Can you speak up?

An example of transcription- Student Interview 4

Diana's class: 3 girls

Codes: Ss-all the three participants; S1, S2, S3- individual student

I: Thank you very much for volunteering for my interview. The purpose of this interview is to understand your feelings about the lesson, which are valued very much by your teacher, and that is why she permits me to observe your lesson. Your feedback is very important to us. It can inform your teacher's next lesson. You can tell me whether you like or dislike any given activity; I will not judge you by the information you provide, under no circumstance would I give your name to your teacher. Could I take notes, entirely for the purpose of my research?

Ss: Yes.

I: Is it okay if I record our conversation? It is an aid to my memory.

Ss: Okay.

I: Thank you very much. Now, can you recall the lesson on your own, just for a second. *30 seconds*

I: Okay, in this lesson, you had the famous cook, and Lady Gaga, etc. What do you think you can learn from this lesson, even including things not related to English?

S1: Less rigid.

I: Anything to do with English or not.

S2: Watching MVs is fun.

S3: Actually, our teacher gives us oral tests all the time; why don't we sing an English song instead? I feel it is easier to memorise lyrics than texts.

I: Good idea.

S3: Come on, Teacher (addressing me), recommend this to our teacher.

S2: Don't tell the teacher we recommend this.

I: No, No. I never give your name to your teacher. She never asks, anyway. You have told me that this lesson is less rigid, and that watching MVs is fun. Is that right?

Ss: Yes.

I: You did group activities. Have you done those in recent lessons?

Ss: Yes, yes, every day.

I: Sitting face to face?

Ss: Yes.

S1: Face to face is better. It is more convenient for discussion.

S2: Lady Gaga is so sexy.

I: Yes, yes!

Ss: *Commenting on Lady Gaga*

I: So, how many of the famous people did you recognise?

Ss: Three, two. I only recognise two.

I: What can you learn from them?

S1: We can watch her talk show.

I: Okay, let's talk about changes in this lesson and which part you like and which part you dislike.

Ss: MV.

I: Tell me more.

S1: Those MVs are good to watch.

S2: Watch more MVs in the future.

I: What if they occupy the time when your teacher could be teaching grammar?

S1: Teachers can play them after a section of grammar teaching, vocab., etc.

S2: They can choose MVs and movies which are related to the lessons.

S3: Play it three minutes before recess.

I: When you watch the MVs, do you have some thoughts in mind?

S: I want to be like Lady Gaga.

I: Do you want to share your thoughts with your class?

S: Yes, Lady Gaga 很性感 (Chinese: very sexy)

I: Can you say that in English? No problem?

S: *Right away.* She is so sexy!

I: That's it! No problem. You have made two suggestions: watching more MVs and singing replacing oral tests. Am I correct?

SS: Yes.

I: What else? Any more comments?

Ss: *Laughing.*

S1: Someone was throwing a whiteboard eraser at someone. (They found it very amusing)

S2: We discussed our classmates' talents.

S3: Sharing.

Interviewer socialise with the students by chatting about something else.

I: Okay, let's leave it. What did you learn about English from this lesson?

S: Everyone's talent.

I: About English?

S: I learnt how Cello is spelt. C-e-l-l-o.

I: Correct.

Interviewer and students talked about a grammar point—will.

I: Any other comment?

S: Do not open the text book in class. *School bell rang.*

I: So, thank you very much again.

Appendix 4.5 Time line of data collection procedures

Phase 1: preparation stage September, 2013

1st One-to-one interviews with three participating teachers

Piloted the 1st questionnaire

Analysed the pilot questionnaire

1st questionnaire with the three classes of the students

Preliminary observation

These all completed during the first week of this September

Phase 2: main stage September, 2013 to January, 2014

1st cycle of the action research

1st workshop completed in mid-September

1st observation completed on 23rd-25th of September

1st interview with 3 students in a focus group

completed on the same day after the observation

2nd one-to-one interviewed with the teachers for post-lesson discussion

completed on the same day after the observation

2nd workshop (included focus group interview for post-lesson discussion)

completed on 25th September

2nd cycle of the action research

2nd observation completed on 28th Oct.- 4th Nov.

2nd interview with the students in a focus group

completed on the same day after the observation

3rd one-to-one interview with the teachers for post-lesson discussion

completed on the same day after the observation

3rd workshop completed on 4th November

* collected 1st school test data (the Mid-term exams)

3rd cycle of the action research

3rd observation 2 completed on 9th, Dec, but Ken-18th, Dec

(should be done in the end of November delayed by the Mid-term exams which were held in the late November, and Ken had been sick for a while)

3rd interview with 3 students in a focus group

4th one-to-one interview with the teachers for post-lesson discussion

4th workshop completed on 20th, Dec

* collected 2nd test data

4th cycle of the action research

4th observation completed on 30th, Dec, 2013; Ken- 2nd, Jan, 2014

4rd interview with 3 students in a focus group

Piloted the 2nd questionnaire with the three interviewed student in Ken's class

5th one-to-one interview with the teachers for post-lesson discussion

5th workshop completed on 3rd, Jan, 2014 (scheduled in the late December)

Analysed the pilot 2nd questionnaire

5th cycle of the action research

5th observation completed on 8th-9th, Jan, 2014

(scheduled in the late January because this year term finished earlier)

5th interview with 3 students in a focus group

6th one-to-one interview with the teachers for post-lesson discussion

Phase 3: final evaluation stage

2nd questionnaire with the students completed on 8th-9th, Jan, 2014

6th workshop completed on 10th, Jan, 2014

* 3rd test data collected in mid Feb, 2014

Appendix 5.1

Table 5.3: Students' attitudes (questionnaire part 1)

Key: a = strongly agree(5 points) b = agree c = no opinions d = disagree e = strongly disagree (1 point)

Total n= 90students							
Item	Regarding teacher talk: (M= 3.63 SD= 1.08)	a	b	c	d	e	M SD
1	<i>I can try to answer my teacher's questions in English if I feel secure and encouraged to</i>	34	28	26	0	1	4.1 .88
		62/69%			1/1%		
2	<i>I like the teacher often ask questions that are related to ourselves, for example, our interests, opinions, etc.</i>	25	30	29	4	3	3.8 .98
		55/61%			7/8%		
3	<i>I like the teacher to correct my oral mistake so that I can learn.</i>	25	36	28	1	0	4.0 .08
		61/68%			1/1%		
4	<i>I do not like the teacher to correct my oral mistakes because I feel I lose face in front of the class.</i>	3	5	38	17	27	2.4 1.06
		8/9%			44/49%		
8	<i>I do not like it when the teacher spends most of the time teaching grammar rules.</i>	12	12	33	15	16	2.9 1.23
		24/27%			31/34%		
10	<i>I prefer to be quiet and just listen passively to the teacher</i>	11	9	24	14	32	2.5 1.39
		20/22%			46/51%		
	Regarding activities: (M= 3.69 SD= .29)	a	b	c	d	e	
5	<i>I believe I can learn English well by actively participating in interaction with the teacher or my peer.</i>	25	23	35	3	4	3.7 1.05
		48/53%			7/8%		
6	<i>I like it when the teacher gives us communicative activities so we can interact in English with our classmates.</i>	23	27	28	8	4	3.6 1.09
		50/56%			12/13%		
7	<i>I do not like to talk to my peer in English in class.</i>	7	12	26	22	23	2.5 1.24
		19/21%			45/50%		
9	<i>The teacher should design meaningful and purposeful language tasks for us to practice using English.</i>	46	18	25	0	1	4.2 .89
		64/71%			1/1%		
11	<i>The teacher should spend more time on group and pair work than drilling in sentence structures.</i>	29	20	29	10	2	3.7 1.11
		49/54%			12/13%		
12	<i>The teacher should spend more time on role play or games than explicitly teaching sentence structures.</i>	20	21	36	10	3	3.5 1.07
		41/46%			13/14%		

Appendix 5.2

Table 5.4 Things students like to do in English class

sub-themes	codes	responses
Opportunities to use the language (24 responses)	free talk in English	8
	role play	6
	interact with the teacher	5
	talk with peers	1
	interact with the teacher and peers	1
	opportunities to present	1
	opportunities to present a speech	1
	present my ideas	1
Group/pair work (24 responses)	group discussion	9
	group activity	5
	games	4
	group practice	3
	group competition	1
	song competition	1
	games competition	1
Listen to their teacher's English (8 responses)	listen to stories from the teacher	5
	listen to the teacher talking their life experience	2
	listen to the teacher speaking in English	1
Learning/practising forms (7 responses)	learn vocabulary	2
	read aloud English	2
	memorise vocabulary	1
	write in English	1
	grammar lessons	1
<u>Other items</u> (10 responses)	watch videos	3
	answer questions'	2
	Enjoy easy lessons	1
	songs	1
	listen to CD of a language learning magazine	1
	listen to peers answer questions	1
	practise English	1
	use CALL	1

Table 5.6 Things students dislike to do in English class

sub-themes	codes	responses	
Learning/practising forms	listen to grammar instruction	12	
	memorise grammar rules	2	
	write test-practice sheet	2	
	read aloud English	4	
	memorise vocabulary	3	
	memorise the reading	1	
	dry instruction	2	
	traditional ways of instruction	1	
	repeated drill practice	1	
	repeat the content	1	
	tongue twister	1	30
Requirement to write individually	tests	6	
	do homework	5	
	take notes	3	
	write compositions	1	
	write worksheet	1	16
Presentation	presentation/ present a speech	5	
	self-introduction to class	1	6
Answer questions	answer questions	6	6

Appendix 5.3

The original plan of 90 minutes for Workshop 1

Procedures:

1	Introducing the notion of reflection and its 4 elements/ Reflective activities	10min
2	Reporting students' questionnaire data/ Discuss contextual factors	10min
3	Introducing the key attributes of communicative approaches (selective)/ communicative competence	10min
4	Explaining im/explicit teaching and learning and their relationship with comm. app.	15min
5	Introducing Littlewood's category, providing his examples, and showing the applications to Lesson One and Two in the textbook	30min
6	Making plans for the first two lessons	10min
7	The framework for observation/Transcription of teacher talk	5min
	Total	90min

Appendix 5.4

The transcription system

The 'turn' refers to a single, unitary contribution to classroom talk by a teacher or a student, or a group of students before the next speaker, regardless to the length of the contribution.

T:	teacher
S:	learner (not identified)
S1: S2: etc.	identified learner
Ss:	several learners at once or the whole class
x	Incomprehensible short sound, probably one word
xxx	longer incomprehensible utterance
/ok/ok/ok/	overlapping or simultaneous utterances by more than one learner
[do you understand?]	overlap between teacher and learner
[I see]	
=	turn continues, or one turn follows another without any pause
(3 sec)	silence; length given in seconds
?	rising intonation, not necessarily a question
acCUSED	indicates that a syllable or word is given extra stress

Adapted from Walsh (2002); Kumaravadivelu (2003)

Figure 5.1 The transcription system

Diana's Activity 2 transcript

Extract 2: Activity 2- Introducing the reading

1 T: *put a poster/board in 30 sec, students doing nothing. Talking.*

OK. Now pay attention to me. Look at the board. Look at the board. Tell me. Who is the lady,

S1? *Few students put their hands up.*

2 S1: grandma

3 T: Whose grandma?

4 S: X

5. T: OK, good. *Chinese* We know she's Linda's grandma. We know she's Linda's grandma. OK.

Point and what the animal is, S2?

6. S2: a cat.

7. T: It's a cat. Who went to grandma's house, S3?

8. S3: Linda

9 T: Linda and her family went to grandma's house. *Point* Look at the tree. What color is the fruit, S4?

10 S4: yellow

11 T: you think, the yellow fruits are apples, mangoes or watermelons, S5?

12 S5: mango

13 T: yes, it is. Do you like mangoes, S6?

14 S6: so so

15 T: so so. What is your favorite fruit?

16 S6: x

17 T: why?

18 S: it is delicious.

19 T: It is delicious. Look at the board. You think, what are they? (2 sec) XX (a name), yici (Chinese, one time). OK. Look at the board. Where are they? In the library, in the museum? Where are they, S7?

20 S7: They are in grandma's house.

21 T: They are in grandma's house. And where? Is it kitchen, dining room or a living room? What are Linda and her family doing?

22 S: singing

23 T: Do you like to sing?

24 S: No

25 T: Why not? You play tennis very well, but you don't like to sing?

26 S: No

27 T: who likes to sing? They are singing. OK.

Appendix 5.5

Extract 3 transcript

The italics show non-linguistic behaviors, and the parentheses show the teacher's or the students' use of the L1, Chinese. 'XXX' indicates incomprehensible sounds.

1T: Everybody, turn to Page 13. Let's read together. What did their families do for them? (repeat after me) What did their families do for them?

2Ss: What did their family do for them?

3T: (Come on) One more time. What did their families do for them? (repeat after me)

What did their families do for them? What did their families do for them?

4Ss: What did their family do for them?

5T: Slow down. (Louder), 'What did their families do for them?'

6Ss: What did their families do for them?

7T: Look at the picture on this page. There are totally six pictures, right. (One group, tell me),

What did you see in the pictures? Tell me. (Are you ready?) Group 1, tell me.

In the first picture, what did you see? (page 13, concentrate) Tell me. (some Chinese)

Group 1, anyone? What did their families do for them? So, in this picture, what did the

mother do and what did the son do? Group 1, tell me. Give me a sentence

8S: (XXX)

9T: Pardon?

10S: (answer what they were doing?)

11T: Yes

12S: They were cooking.

13T: They were cooking and the mother?

14S: They were cooking and the mother *open the pot.

15T: Hay hay, everyone, mind the tense. (Look at the tense. We have just taught the past tense, so we need to use it, don't we?) Listen and look at the picture carefully.

Who are in the picture? Who are in the picture? A mother... and a boy... and a son, right?

So, what did the mother do for her son? The mother (1 sec) The mother (1 sec) *Looked at Group 1* (Next group) Group 2, tell me.

16S: (can't tell from the picture)

17T: (can't tell from the picture, really?)(It's easy) (you are thinking in a very complex way), S1.

18S1 : [XXX]

19T: [Yes. *Kept nodding her head and smiling*] The mother cooked for her son. The mother cooked for her family. (Is this picture not clear enough?) Next, Picture 2, Group 2

19T: (Go on) Picture 2, (can you tell from the picture?) A father and a daughter. (that phrase What phase? You don't know?) *saw a student putting up her hand* S2?

20S2 : XXX

21T: Take the medicine. But is it true? (Keep it simple) easy (you are thinking in a very complex way)

22S: XXXX

23T: OK, good. (It is a good answer.) (That will do) The father told the daughter to take some medicine. Ok, good. (But, the main thing is..., remember this phrase?) take care of. *Wrote it on the board.* Everybody, take care of.

24Ss: take care of

25T: take care of

26Ss: take care of

27T: What did the father do for his daughter?

28Ss: [He t-] with weak voice

29T: [He t-o-o-k] one more time, one more time. He took care of his daughter

30Ss: He took care of his daughter.

31T: Next, Picture 3.

Appendix 5.6

Suggestions to the teacher responding to the first observations

In the email, I wrote:

According to my observations so far, I conclude that the students need to develop the ability to- and habit of discussion in L2. To this end, they need the rules and the languages. Here I draw on my own experiences, and welcome feedback and further discussion.

A. Some adjustments can be made to maximise each learner's learning opportunities. For example, apart from giving **the instruction about how to do an activity**, we can tell students **the rules/ instructions for doing it**. Taking the unscramble activity as an example, the teacher can remind students to work cooperatively (by distributing the sentences to each student), so they would not be controlled by only one or two of the students. We can tell students:

Rule 1: Open the envelope. Everyone, take one or two slips. Make sure everybody has at least one.

Rule 2: Read out your sentence(s) to your partners. You can ask for help if you have any difficulties.

Rules 3: If you think you have the first sentence, put it on the table where everyone can see. Other members decide whether they agree to it or not. Then put the second sentence below it. Continue the procedures until you finish all the sentences. You may need to use these phases in the course of your discussion:

Maybe this comes before/after that.

I think this is the first sentence.

What do you think?

Rule 4: Call the teacher over to check your answer. After that, you can paste these sentences on one of your members' worksheet.

(The rules may sound like procedures, too)

B. One way of developing students' habits or abilities in maintaining a conversation is to teach them the language they need, as illustrated in the last example. Another way is through activities. These activities include the 20 questions, the crossword, the tic-tac-toe (shown in Lesson 1, students need to keep taking turns in order to win). Surely, we need, as well, to set up rules for these activities to maximise learners learning opportunities.

C. We can develop some 'strategies' to increase students' involvement. In the interview activity, they need only one target question, 'What did you do for your family....?' However, we may not know how many questions they have asked. We can do some more work to encourage students to ask more. For example, the teacher can write 3 things (e.g. took care of family members, went shopping, or ...) on a piece of paper in advance (as a key), and tell students that you will ask them this question at the end:

If you interview someone who did something which is written in my key, you will get a reward, or an extra point. The more interviews you do, the better your chances of winning.

Students always like to guess; especially, they want to see if they can think as their teacher does.

Appendix 5.7

Table 5.15 Observation- behaviour and strategy sheet- Ken-1-2

Activity Students' behaviour	Observed group/minute	Teachers' strategies / note	Result to teachers' strategies
Activity2: jigsaw-discussion		Took 3 minutes	
<i>Talked in L1 actively</i>	<i>////</i>		
<i>Talked in L1</i>	<i>///</i>		
<i>Talked in L1 mixed with L2</i>	<i>/</i>		
<i>One student lay her head on table, and not clear about the rest members</i>	<i>/</i>	<i>Walked to her and patted her on the shoulder</i>	<i>Sat up and tried to re-join her group</i>
<i>Unclear (to the observer)</i>	<i>/</i>		
<i>Talked in L1 mixed with L2</i>	<i>/</i>		
<i>Talked in L1 actively</i>	<i>//</i>		
<i>Some wrote worksheet</i>	<i>/</i>		
Follow Activity 2- discussion for questions in worksheet		Took 10 minutes	
<i>Read the answers in L1 to let other student copy</i>	<i>//</i>		
<i>Checked answers with peer</i>	<i>//</i>		
<i>Some copied, some shared answers in L2</i>	<i>/</i>		
<i>Unclear (to the observer)</i>	<i>/</i>		
<i>One student lay her head on table</i>	<i>/</i>	<i>Walked to her and patted her on the shoulder</i>	<i>Sat up and tried to re-join her group</i>
<i>Wrote individually</i>	<i>///</i>		

Appendix 5.8

Table 5.16 Observation- behaviour and strategy sheet- Ken-1-3

Activity Students' behaviour	Observed group/minute	Teachers' strategies / note	Result to teachers' strategies
Activity3: designing a dialogue Took 10 minutes			
<i>One student asked a question</i>	/	Answered and taught to the whole class	Listened and took notes
<i>Seemed to discuss in L1</i>	///		
<i>Wrote individually</i>	/		
<i>Wrote individually</i>	//		
<i>Talked in L1 mixed with L2</i>	/		
<i>T helped them</i>	/		
<i>One student asked a question</i>	/	Answered and taught to the whole class	Listened and took notes
<i>Seemed chatting, not engaged</i>	/		
<i>Shared opinions with peer</i>	/		
<i>Some wrote individually</i>	///		
<i>Unclear to the observer</i>	//		
<i>Discussed with peer L1+L2</i>	//		
<i>One student asked a question</i>	/	Answered and taught to the whole class	Listened and took notes
<i>Seemed chatting, not engaged</i>	/ (the same group)		
<i>Shared opinions with peer</i>	/(the same group)		
<i>Some Wrote individually;</i> <i>Some talked (?)</i>	///		

L1. ?L2)			
Unclear to the observer	///		
Some wrote individually	///		
One student asked a question	/	Answered and taught to the whole class	Listened and took notes
Seemed engaged in something (not clear in L1 or L2, or a mix)	///		
Seemed engaged in something (not clear in L1 or L2, or a mix)	///		
Shared opinions with peer	///		

Appendix 5.9

The extract of John's reflections in Workshop 2

In class, teachers should make an attempt to activate students' "function"; the function of speaking and writing. That is, teachers should move from being a role of a transmitter to a facilitator through some activities we designed such as discussion, jigsaw, and let students keep speaking and writing, utilise IRF to extend students' contribution, and to inspire students to think more. [Teachers' 3 stages]: teachers in the 1st stages teach vocabulary, tell a lot of rules and give lectures. Teachers in the 2nd stage realise that they should upgrade to Q+ A, keep Q+ A, group competition. This seems to create high atmosphere in class, but CLT is realised in the 3rd stage where no more teacher-centred, and become student-centred, increase students' speaking and writing ability, keep increasing their ability and internalize their speaking and writing ability. Students are happy, too. They will attend to form.

Surely, we cannot spend too much time in designing tasks; however, we can develop some simple tasks to increase students' participation and also students' turns. Tina's materials help me a lot, so I am willing to design some jigsaw and information gap activities, and carried them out in class. All I needed to do is walking around and push them [to engage them]. Students seemed to engage more [than usual] (John).

Appendix 5.10

Lesson 5 warm-up activity in Ken's class


Lesson 5

What Do You Plan to Do?


Warm-up

What can you do to help?


1




2



3



4



Appendix 5.11

Examples of communicative approaches and activities to develop students' ability to proceed group/pair work

Crossword is an information gap activity. Except for reviewing vocabulary, it can be used to review the content of the dialogue and reading. For example, for Edison, Linda..., students can mention what they did....e.g. 'She caught a bad cold.' (Answer key: Linda)

Kill the sentence/text

Procedure

- 1 On the board, write a text of 20-40 words, including some vocabulary or grammar that you would like to review.
 - 2 Everyone chooses any two words that wish from the text and writes them down. Add that soon they will need to be ready to use either word in a sentence.
 - 3 Ask if anyone can say a true statement (i.e. not a question or command) that includes one of the words they have written down. Make it clear that anonymous statement like *She is happy* are unacceptable but ones like *Annette is happy* are good, provided that Annette is a real person who is really happy. The sentences can be as simple or as complex as the students choose. They should not be connected thematically with the original text.
 - 4 When an acceptable statement has been said correctly by a student, erase the word from the board and continue with other words until most or all are gone.
 - 5 If your text is quite short, ask who can say it from memory. Otherwise, ask students to write it from memory, individually or in pairs, as they prefer.
- (Lindstromberg, 2004:3)

Why it surprises me

Procedure

- 1 On the board sketch two people, A and B, facing each other. A says *I saw Jill up in a tree*. B says *You saw **who** up in a tree?!*
- 2 Say that B is very surprised by A's sentence. Invite the class to guess why. Accept any suitable guess- e.g. *Jill is 90 years old*, *Jill is a baby*, *Jill is a dog*. If no one offers a suitable reason, give one yourself.
- 3 Say that people ask questions like B's especially when they have heard something but find it hard to believe and want confirmation and/or more information.
- 4 Model the pronunciation of the sentence, showing exaggerated disbelief.
- 5 Lead repetition practice. Encourage students to exaggerate the stress and pitch pattern.
- 6 Ask how- if B wasn't surprised- this surprise question would be changed into a normal question. The answer is *Who did you see?* (Lindstromberg, 2004:49)

Appendix 5.12

Table 5.22 Comparing the features of Wendy's teacher talk

Criteria \ feature	Teacher talk in O1	O3	Results in O1	O3
Primary focus on meaning	Started with meaning-focused (+) Frequently shifted their attention to form (-) Negotiated co-constructed meaning (+) Lack referential questions (-) Lack personalised questions (-)	Remained (+) Improved (+) Increased (+) Remained (+) Improved (+)	Few successive exchanges (-) Teacher spoke more than students (-)	Students' interaction with teacher increased (+)
Interaction and involvement	Limited strategies used for feedback(-) Limit response time for learners (-) Put the 'standard answer' as priority (-) The way to give feedback interrupted the talk flow (-)	Improved (+) Improved (+) Not observed (+) Not observed (+)		

Appendix 5.13

Recommendation for the role-play in lesson 7

For increasing their use of interaction in L2, you can write on their worksheet the language they can use, such as,

You may use these languages when you discuss with your group:

How do you show 'to be honest'?

I can show you, look!

How about this? Look!

That's good. We'll do that.

Appendix 5.14

Ken's worksheets for the third observation

Seasons, months, weather.

A. Write the months to the correct season.

September, May, November, December, January, August, October, July, March, April, June

Spring Summer

3. 6.

4. 7.

5. 8.

9. 1.

10. 2. February

11. 12.

Autumn

B. Answer the questions. REMEMBER: We use in before the names of the months.

1. When is your birthday? _____
2. What is your favorite season? _____
3. When does your school year begin? _____
4. When is your mom's birthday? _____
5. What holiday do we celebrate in December? _____
6. What is the coldest season in the year? _____
7. What is the hottest season in the year? _____
8. When can you go to the beach? _____
9. When can you skate and ski? _____

C. When do you wear...?



Sweater



Boots



Shorts



Coat

Complete the sentences:

1. I wear _____ in winter.
2. I wear _____ in summer.
3. I wear boots in _____.
4. I wear sweater in _____.

D. Circle the correct word.

1. You take an umbrella when it is **sunny**/windy/rainy.
2. The nights are shorter in **summer**/autumn/winter.
3. You wear boots when it's **wet**/warm/dry.
4. The flowers are blooming in **winter**, autumn/spring.
5. The leaves are falling in **autumn**/summer/spring.

E. Write some sentences about your favorite season.

Why? What do you wear? What can you do? What is the weather like?

Appendix 5.15

Ken's worksheets for the fifth observation

I. Warm up~ Bingo 請從下列字庫中，挑選 16 個填入下表空格中，每個限用一次。 Ken 05

Word Bank(字庫): is, isn't, was, wasn't, are, aren't, were, weren't, do, don't, does, doesn't, did, didn't, will, won't, I'll, you'll, he'll, she'll, it'll, we'll, you'll, they'll, I'm, he's, she's, it's, we're, you're, they're.

II. Circle the word that you hear. (圈選聽到的字詞)

1.	yesterday	today	tomorrow
2.	tomorrow morning	tomorrow afternoon	tomorrow evening
3.	next week	next month	next year
4.	tonight	next Friday night	tomorrow night
5.	in the future	this winter vacation	next summer vacation

III. Information Gap (訊息交換)

(Student A)

John, Ken and Peter are talking about their plans for this winter vacation. Please ask your partner to get information on what they will do or not do.


例: A: Will John clean his bedroom this winter vacation?

B: Yes, he will. He will clean the bedroom this winter vacation.

A: Will Ken clean his bedroom this winter vacation?

B: No, he won't. He won't clean the bedroom this winter vacation.



	John	Ken	Peter
clean his bedroom	Y	N	
see 圓仔 	Y		N
visit elementary school teachers	1	N	7
get taller & become stronger	N	4	N
help mom cook big dinner for Chinese New Year	2	N	8
visit grandparents	N	5	Y
practice playing music	3	N	9
play online games all day	Y	6	Y

IV. My plans. (我的計畫)/ Setting Goals. (設定目標)

Ken's Class: 203 Name: _____

1. List three things that you're going to do today . 列出三項你今天要達成的目標/要做的事		
2. List three things that you're going to do this weekend .		
3. List three things that you're going to do this month .		

V. Please Interview (訪問) each group member three questions and write down the answers.

1. What are you going to do today ?	
例: Tom	is going to do his homework today.
a.	
b.	
c.	
2. What are you going to do this weekend ?	
e.g. Tom	is going to see a movie this weekend.
a.	
b.	
c.	
3. What are you going to do this month ?	
e.g. Tom	is going to study hard this month.
a.	
b.	
c.	

Appendix 5.16 Wendy's Future Tense Activity

What will you do with it? Will you.....?

Ex. Will you eat it? No, I won't.



I will ride it.

I will use it to go to school.

I will fix it when it 's broken.

1. A puppy



2. Chopsticks



3. Show



4. A typhoon



5. Think about one thing on your own!



Appendix 5.17

Students' attitudes towards the changes the teacher had made

Table 5.27 Ken's students' attitudes towards the changes the teacher had made

	Changes	Like very much	Like	Neutral	Dislike	Dislike very much	Total
1	games	4	7	1			12
2	Group work	1	4	6	1		12
3	More worksheet		1	5	3		9
4	Group competition	4	2	1			7
5	Group discussion		3	1			4
6	More supplement	2	1				3
7	Teacher talk in mixed L1& L2	2					2
8	Using a projector		2				2
9	Role play	1					1
10	Changing seats for group activities					1	1
11	Writing answers on the board	1					1
12	More instruction on grammar		1				1
13	Variety of activities, interesting	1					1
14	Appropriate assistance		1				1

Table 5.28 Diana's students' attitudes towards the changes the teacher had made

	Changes	Like very much	Like	Neutral	Dislike	Dislike very much	Total
1	Using small white boards		9	10			19
2	Assign score	3	8	4			15
3	Watching MVs	3	6	2			11
4	Group work	1	4	4			9
5	Working together on worksheet	1	3	3		1	8
6	Presentation (as a group)	3	2	2			7

7	Group discussion	1	3	2			6
8	Sitting face to face	1	3	1			5
9	Group cooperation	1	1	4			6
10	Having activities		1	1			2
11	Near real life			2			2
12	More supplement		1				1

Table 5.29 Wendy's students' attitudes towards the changes the teacher had made

	Changes	Like very much	Like	Neutral	Dislike	Dislike very much	Total
1	Games	3	9				12
2	Interact/talking in English		5	2			7
3	(Drama) performance	2	4				6
4	More questions		3	1			4
5	Group activities		1	3			4
6	More worksheet	1	1	2			4
7	Activities for festivals		1	2			3
8	Oral quiz	1		2			3
9	Assigning score	1	1				2
10	Memorise grammar rules			2			2
11	Using total English	1		1			2
12	More group discussion		1		1		2
13	instruction on grammar		2				2
14	Time arrangement (for class affairs)				1	1	2
15	More instruction		1				1
16	Memorise vocabulary			1			1
17	Quiz on writing sentences			1			1
18	Group cooperation	1					1
19	Personalised questions	1					1

Appendix 5.18

Students' perceptions of their progress

Table 5.30 Ken's students' perceptions of improvement in the seven areas

Area	A lot of improvement	Some improvement	Little improvement
Listening	5	22	2/29 students
Speaking	7	18	4
Reading	6	18	5
Writing	5	18	5
Grammar	3	19	7
Vocabulary	7	20	2
Translation	6	13	10

Table 5.31 Wendy's students' perceptions of improvement in the seven areas

Area	A lot of improvement	Some improvement	Little improvement
Listening	9	18	4/30 students
Speaking	11	13	6
Reading	10	16	4
Writing	9	11	10
Grammar	11	11	8
Vocabulary	8	15	7
Translation	6	14	10

Table 5.32 Diana's students' perceptions of improvement in the seven areas

Area	A lot of improvement	Some improvement	Little improvement
Listening	8	20	2/30 students
Speaking	11	15	4
Reading	10	15	5
Writing	7	15	8
Grammar	7	15	7
Vocabulary	10	13	7
Translation	11	11	8

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